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CHRISTIAN COURIER
A Reformed Weekly

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Christian groups laid groundwork for landmines treaty

Alan Doerksen

OSLO, Norway — Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were gratified that almost 90 nations signed the international treaty to ban landmines drawn up in Oslo in mid-September.

Although Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, has been credited by many as the initiator of the so-called "Ottawa process" of banning landmines, NGOs have also played an important role in raising public awareness of this issue and putting pressure on political leaders to take action to ban landmines.

Axworthy himself acknowledged this in a speech he made in Oslo to an NGO forum on banning landmines that was held at the same time as the intergovernmental conference.

"Our meeting affords me the opportunity to thank you and all members of the anti-landmine movement around the world who have played such a defining role in engaging public opinion and creating political will," Axworthy told NGO representatives. "It has been your work... along with officials and numerous political leaders, that has brought us to this point — where a treaty incorporating over 100 governments from around the world is within reach. [NGOs] are now part of the way decisions have to be made."

COURTESY MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

A Laotian points out an unexploded Vietnam War-era "bombie" in Laos. Christian agencies have been active in removing bombs and landmines from affected countries.

Takes lead

During the main conference in Oslo, Axworthy announced that Canada would take a lead in banning landmines by destroying all its remaining landmines by early December, when a treaty signing conference is scheduled to be held in Ottawa. Last October, the Canadian government announced that two-thirds of the country's landmines would be destroyed, which was completed last November.

"We are proud to confirm that Canada will no longer use these weapons," said Axworthy in Oslo.

Phil Maher, of World Vision Canada's media and publications department, says the U.S.'s lack of willingness to sign the treaty "leaves a gaping hole others can drive through." But he thinks the American government may sign a treaty on landmines at a later date. Other NGO representatives agreed with this assessment.

President Clinton has indicated his support for a ban on landmines by saying that the U.S. would comply with the treaty as soon as it found alternatives to its defensive use of landmines on the North/South Korea border. Clinton said he had instructed military leaders to immediately begin searching for those alternatives.

Eighty-nine countries have now agreed to the ban, but notable exceptions are Russia and China. Maher is concerned because these two countries

See **AGENCIES** *page 2...*

Gerry Peterson lives life with joy and gusto

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — When people meet Gerry Peterson for the first time, the things he can't do are obvious. He can't walk, talk or feed himself. He can't get out of bed in the morning on his own, or comb his hair or make a phone call.

What they see is a man who sits in a wheelchair which he propels with the one foot he can control somewhat. They see a face often contorted with the effort to vocalize, and arms twisted in awkward positions.

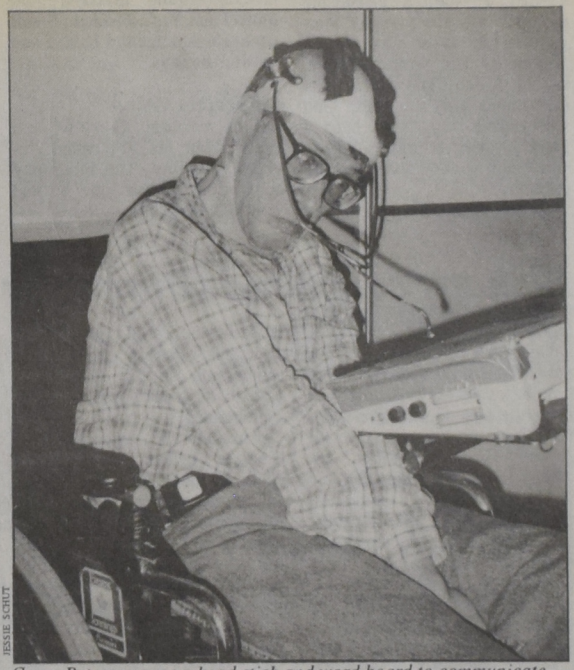
But it doesn't take long before they also realize they're in the presence of a talented, gifted man with a huge sense of humor and a zest for life that's contagious.

Major complications at Gerry's birth 48 years ago deprived his brain of oxygen for about 15 minutes. It left him with a condition called athetoid cerebral palsy. He has no control over his vocal chords or most of his muscles.

No surrender

His parents were told to place him in an institution and forget him. Instead, armed with prayer, faith and determination, they brought him up as normally as possible with his two brothers. He played with friends in the

See **EDMONTON** *page 2...*



JESSIE SCHUT

Gerry Peterson uses a head stick and word board to communicate.

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News

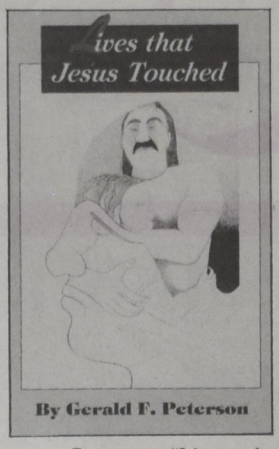
Edmonton man uses unique communication technique

... continued from page 1

neighborhood who pulled him around in a cart. He attended school, church and Boy Scouts.

A breakthrough occurred when Gerry's mom, after a lot of prayer, discovered a method to let him communicate. Now he wears a helmet equipped with a wand-like head stick. Using the few muscles in his neck which he can control, he points the head stick to an alphabet board, and the resulting words and letters show up on a screen.

It's a laborious and time-consuming operation to have a discussion with Gerry, but one that he loves. With a twinkle in his eye, he says he could easily keep it up 20 hours a day. He's rarely at a loss for words. In fact, his friends say that it's hard to shut him up.



Unique contribution

Gerry's life is a busy one. He's heavily involved with his church, West Meadows Baptist in Edmonton, attending services and Bible studies and helping with the Friendship Group which ministers to persons with developmental disabilities.

"When I told my church I wanted to start a Friendship Group," says group leader Margaret Jones, "Gerry was my first volunteer. He wrote to me, saying, 'I don't know how I can contribute, but I'm sure God will find a way.' He's been a great support, a prayer partner and helps with newsletters and publicity."

Of his involvement with the group, Gerry says, "I have a lot of Bibles that I study, but those students have more faith. They are teaching me what is most valuable in life."

He also is involved with the New Democratic Party, pointing out that since Tommy Douglas, the founder of the party, was a Baptist, he's just carrying on a tradition. He even ran for the nomination in his riding.

"I lost the nomination, but I am thinking about running in a different riding. Perhaps I am nuts. I am mule-headed, I will try again and again. I have a bug to run," he says.

Imperfect vision

Five years ago, Gerry wrote a book about his life called *Accepting Reality*. The biography tells about the struggle he had coming to terms with his disability.

Especially hard to deal with was the conviction of some Christians that if he only prayed hard enough, or had enough faith, he would be healed of his condition.

"The pastor who told me this had spectacles," Gerry said. "I asked him why his eyesight wasn't perfect, but he couldn't answer me."

Eventually, Gerry developed his own beliefs about healing and disease. "I believe a person should keep on seeking the Lord either until he heals or he gives his peace and grace in such a way that the person can accept what has happened," he now says. He himself no longer prays for healing, saying, "If I keep on praying for physical healing, then I really haven't accepted myself, nor do I trust God the way I should."

Self publishing

More recently, Gerry came out with another book called *Lives That Jesus Touched*. In it, he retells Bible stories of people who were healed by Jesus, interspersing them with other stories of contemporary people who are dealing with disabilities and hurt.

Optimistically, he had 1500 copies printed. He's discovered that self-publishing isn't a very profitable business, and he's thinking of new ways to push his material.

Several weeks ago he ran into some friends in a big commercial bookshop at the mall. The conversation quickly turned to his book, copies of which he just happened to have with him in a bag slung over the back of his chair. Before the conversation was over, both friends had purchased a book.

Now he figures parking himself in a bookstore with copies of his product laid out in his lap might be a good marketing trick!

In writing about lives that Jesus touched, Gerry has written about himself. He's a living demonstration of how Jesus can bring many kinds of healing into a person's life.

"I believe the Lord is using me for his glory just the way I am," he says. "I believe he is using my disability to help me in my personal spiritual growth because through it all I am learning to be more understanding and have acquired more patience, kindness and faithfulness."

And obviously, a sense of humor.

Gerry Peterson's book Lives that Jesus Touched *can be ordered for $10 from Gerald F. Peterson Books, 11503-100 Ave., Edmonton, AB T5K-2K7.*

Bishops commend Ottawa for strong stand

Alan Doerksen

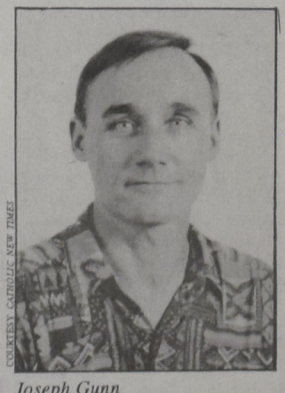
OTTAWA — The social affairs office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has been working to ban landmines for a long time, says co-director Joseph Gunn. Although the American government has not signed the treaty on landmines, Gunn notes that Catholics in the U.S. have also been outspoken against the weapons.

Gunn is pleased with Axworthy's role in initiating the landmine treaty and in banning Canadian landmines. The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs is "on the same wavelength" as his agency on this issue, says Gunn. But he notes that a few years ago, he received a letter from the same department defending the use of landmines.

Axworthy has "grabbed this issue by the horns," says Gunn. "I think there's very good momentum on this issue. The Canadian government's to be commended."

Although the American government called for a compromise deal on the treaty, asking for such measures as an exemption for South Korea and a delay of several years before the treaty would be implemented, Gunn says, "We agree with MAC there shouldn't be exemptions. We'd prefer countries to sign on without exemptions. Making exemptions weakens the whole thing."

Now that a treaty has been agreed to, Gunn wants to see further action taken on the issue of landmines. "We have to put money behind this to train people to de-mine [affected countries]," he insists. Gunn hopes that Russia and China will eventually sign the landmine treaty. He expects his organization will be involved with the Ottawa conference in December.


COURTESY CATHOLIC NEW TIMES

Joseph Gunn

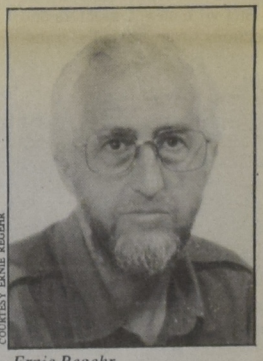
Pacifist groups glad treaty not compromised

Alan Doerksen

WINNIPEG and KITCHENER — Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was involved recently with landmines in a practical way by training Laotians to detect and remove the mines in their country. Although this program has now been handed over to other agencies, MCC has continued doing advocacy on this issue, says Dale Taylor, MCC's associate executive director.

Taylor is glad that so many countries signed the Oslo treaty on landmines and satisfied that no compromises were made.

Taylor believes the changes to the treaty the U.S. called for were unreasonable, especially an exemption that would allow countries to use landmines during times of war. The effects of landmines are felt in peace times as well, she asserts. But she believes the U.S. will sign the treaty some time.


COURTESY ERNIE REGEHR

Ernie Regehr

Taylor says she is proud of Axworthy for his action against landmines. She also saw Princess Diana as playing an important role in raising public awareness of this issue.

Axworthy's part crucial

Ernie Regehr, policy director of Project Ploughshares (an agency that focuses on peace issues), says the main concern at the Oslo conference was that the treaty on landmines not get "watered down" because of U.S. demands for exemptions. Although the U.S rejected the treaty, Regehr observes, "It's difficult for the U.S. to be separated. The political pressure will be enormous" for the U.S. to eventually agree to a ban.

Project Ploughshares has focused on the abolition of anti-personnel landmines but not antitank landmines, which the agency sees as being a separate issue.

Axworthy's leadership on the landmines issue has been "critical and decisive," asserts Regehr. "If the Canadian government had not given major attention to this, we wouldn't be anywhere near signing an agreement."

Although many NGOs have been speaking out on this issue, Regehr says, "It needed to be picked up by political leadership."

"Signing the treaty is just the beginning," says Regehr. "Countries need to be compliant with it."

Calgarian's simple message: control birth by saying No

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — Across the continent, some think there's a new sexual revolution brewing. People in a wide variety of fields, including Wendy Lowe, are at the forefront of planning for it.

Now that schools are back in session, Lowe will be busy taking the revolution's message into classrooms across southern Alberta, as well as elsewhere on the continent where she's asked to speak from time to time.

It's a simple message: "Saying 'No' as a birth control method." Lowe is executive director of the Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre, formerly known as the Calgary Crisis Pregnancy Centre, a ministry supported by the city's evangelical Christian community.

Because of her ground-breaking work with Alberta schools, Lowe was in Washington, D.C., in early August attending a leadership summit on abstinence, joining about 600 other people who are on the front lines in dealing with unwed mothers and infections from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

UNESCO

Bill Clinton: "All of you need to help us send the strongest possible message: It's wrong to be pregnant or father a child unless you are married and ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood."

Clinton's cue

The participants were among what they believe are a growing number of community leaders at all levels beginning to promote the value of directing young people to abstain from sexual involvement until marriage.

So far, efforts are fragmented. Hence the reason for the Washington gathering. They're taking their cue from U.S. President Bill Clinton, who said at the beginning of the year, "All of you need to help us send the strongest possible message: It's wrong to be pregnant or father a child unless you are married and ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood."

Clinton is more concerned about the economic impact than the moral issues involved, conference organizers believed. But timing is crucial, and they point to the latest facts:

* Five of the top 10 most frequently reported infectious diseases during 1995 were sexually transmitted diseases;

* Chlamydia was the most commonly reported infectious disease in 1995, even though it was the first year that data was collected on the disease;

* STDs are not a stationary group of infections. Eight new sexually transmitted pathogens have been identified since 1980, including HIV;

* Each year, more than one million teenagers become pregnant across North America.

Canadian realities

While those are U.S. statistics, the situation in Canada for STDs is similar. Canada, however, for a variety of reasons, has proportionately fewer teenage pregnancies.

But a recent informal survey of one group of Calgary teenage mothers showed that 11 per cent had STDs, down from 27 per cent a year earlier but significantly higher than the average for pregnant woman generally.

Moreover, women aged 15-24 account for more than 50 per cent of all STDs reported. It's because of facts like those that Lowe is so emphatic about teenagers saying "No" as a birth control method.

These sexual revolutionaries want to affect social policy, establish more education programs and draw the news media's attention to the abstinence position.

Lowe has been with the centre since 1988. Early on Lowe discovered two things. Teenagers were often ill-informed; and school teachers felt ill-equipped to talk about sexuality.

Sense of invincibility

While statistics are effective in influencing adults, they have little impact on teenagers, who generally regard themselves as invincible. Not many regard abstinence as a valid choice.

So Lowe developed an interactive, participatory educational program that focuses on talking about commitment in a relationship and how to actually practise abstinence in a relationship.

She has a standing bet with every class she visits. Lowe offers them a looney if they walk out without learning something. "It hasn't cost a cent," she said during an interview at her Electric Avenue office.

She begins by talking about the effectiveness of various forms of birth control. Then she plays a game in which students pass around pieces of paper with the names of the seven most common STDs on them. The students exchange the pieces of paper the way they usually move in and out of relationships. You can imagine what they hand on to each other.

Teacher support

Then she talks about the impact of various STDs on people's lives, especially women. Lowe points out the difference between "safe sex" and "safer sex," i.e., abstinence.

Finally, she discusses how to say No: by setting physical limits; communicating and enforcing those limits; and then examining how teenagers date.

"Most teen pregnancies are conceived between 3 and 5 p.m. in one or the other of the teen's parents' homes."

Last year she spoke to 6,000 students in 175 presentations. "The kids love it," she says.

No religious overtones

"Teachers are really supportive of the abstinence message," according to Lowe. "They genuinely care about the welfare of the kids. They are overwhelmed with what they see. They know how ill-equipped these kids are to make decisions and to deal with the consequences."

Lowe will go where ever she's asked. All it costs the school is her gas mileage. Even though the centre is Christian-based, Lowe is very careful to focus only on the abstinence message. "It doesn't have to come from a religious or moral base," she says. "I would be really surprised if the kids or the teachers knew where our speakers are coming from on a religious base.

"The board is committed to being pro-active on this issue. It's very pragmatic. We want to see kids not experience unplanned pregnancies in their teen years; not to live with the life-long consequences of STDs."

Her program has been adopted by several communities across the U.S. looking for effective educational tools. They're dealing with the consequences of the 1960s sexual revolution of free love in which individuals felt free to have sex with whomever they wanted, whenever they wanted.

"We now know that there is no such thing as free love," Lowe tells students. "There is a very high price tag attached. The unfair part is that you are the generation that pays the price for free love. There is now an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases among the teenagers of North America."

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Editorial

The age of the martyrs is now

When I was a boy, I used to page through an illustrated book about martyrs. The drawings were what really drew me.I remember seeing a group of people hovering in the middle of a large arena, hungry lions circling them. I asked myself whether I would ever have the courage to die for the faith. I could not imagine allowing myself to be eaten by lions.

But then I would put the question aside. Why fret about that when you live in a society in which Christian worship is permitted? The age of the martyrs was hundreds of years in the past, wasn't it? Christians were dying in World War II concentration camps while I was dreaming about martyrs, but I would not know about that until some years later.

The idea that the age of the martyrs is a thing of the past is still very much alive today, even among Christians. Ignorance is bliss, they say, but it's not bliss for the millions who today are suffering severe hardships, even death, because they believe in the name of Jesus Christ.

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- *express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective;*
- *provide contact for the Christian community.*

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"The shocking, untold story of our time is that more Christians have died this century simply for being Christians than in the first 19 centuries after the birth of Christ," writes Nina Shea in her book *In the Lion's Den*. "They have been persecuted and martyred before an unknowing, indifferent world and a largely silent Christian community."

The silence is so deafening that *Wall Street Journal* columnist Michael Horowitz was taken aback at how minimal the response was to his expose of the persecution of Christians throughout the world. In a letter to 150 leading mission boards in the U.S. he said, "If I had written a story about anti-Semitism, I would have been overwhelmed with support from the Christian community. But when Christian persecution was involved, the Christian community seemed tongue-tied and embarrassed." He, who himself is a Jew, called it a disgrace.

Prejudice and comfort

Dr. Paul Marshall, senior member at the Institute for Christian Studies and author of the book *Their Blood Cries Out*, explains the apparent indifference this way: Many of America's opinion makers, who are secular in outlook, refuse to take religion seriously. Their views of religion are laced with prejudices based on superficial contact with religion at one time in their life. It is their prejudices that form "a barrier to recognizing the suffering of hundreds of millions of children, women and men worldwide." (*Christian Courier* printed a news report and a book review of Marshall's book in the May 23 issue of this year.)

If prejudice and ignorance explain why unbelievers don't care about the persecution of Christians, what explains the fact that Christians in the West do not seem to care? Are we afraid that our comfortable lifestyle might be jarred by the unwelcome news that people who believe what we believe have to die for that? Is it a sense of helplessness that paralyzes us? Are we falling for the deception that if the secular press does not cover it, it has not happened? Why, for example, are so few informed prayers on behalf of the persecuted church sent to heaven in church services? Prayer is such a powerful weapon given to the church.

Marshall gives various reasons why American evangelicals show little or no interest in the persecuted church, the most striking of which is that they are too much focused on success and inner peace to want to bother with soul-disturbing news about apparent failure.

Another holocaust

Reading Marshall's book is not a happy pastime experience. The stories coming out of Sudan are horrific. One such story is told by Neema, a young woman from a Christian village. She was carried off into slavery, along with other women, sold to a man who repeatedly raped her when his wife was out of the house. When her master's wife discovered that she was pregnant, she chased her out of the house. Slave traders brought her back to her family and sold her for five cows. But now she cannot marry because she has been with a man and has a child. And Neema is one of the lucky ones who survived.

"More than half the population of southern Sudan [where the Christians live] ... is now in camps, writes Marshall. "The Sudanese death toll in the last ten years is estimated at anywhere from one-and-a-half to three million." Marshall compares the circumstances in Sudan to Hitler's treatment of the Jews.

And this is only one of many countries he reports on. Stories of oppression in communist countries like China and Vietnam are equally chilling. Although officially there is no one imprisoned for religious reasons in China, hundreds of thousands are incarcerated and tortured because their faith practices are seen as political acts of subversion. "The communist principle is simply that Caesar is God. In the face of that confession, all genuine religion has to be seen as a threat," writes Marshall.

Lest we forget

Marshall recommends a sustained effort at remaining informed about persecuted Christians, possible contacts between a local Western church and a persecuted church, and regular prayers on behalf of the persecuted church. A subscription to newsletters like *Open Doors* and *Voice of the Martyrs* would help the pastor or an elder stay abreast of recent developments.

Persecuted Christians are often isolated from the rest of the world and can feel terribly lonely. Discovering that others know about and pray for them can be amazingly uplifting. When the Apostle Paul was in chains for the gospel, he wrote the Philippians: "Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance." In the case of Paul, he knew that prayers would eventually lead to his freedom.

Let's not forget our suffering brothers and sisters, wherever they live and whatever language they speak. "They are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" (Eph.2:19). **BW**

Letters

What matters is our response to life

Last week two "candles" burned out in the world. With their distinctive light, these candles shone brightly for countless the world over. Now their light is gone. People mourned, and in their mourning they reflected.

Diana, Princess of Wales, and Mother Teresa of the slums of Calcutta were unique people. They extended to others a human hand, warm heart and healing touch. Household names, they touched the lives of thousands in life, and now millions in death.

Commentators suggested that "the sorrow over Diana's death indicates a spiritual yearning for something larger than a life of getting and spending" (Murray Campbell, *The Globe and Mail*). Diana did have such a life, recognized it for what it was and sought more.

Were we confronted these past weeks with a spiritual void in many lives, or degrees of it in all of our lives? Were we forced to examine our own void or yearning?

As Madeleine Bunting put it, the story of Diana and Mother Teresa is "not a story of sainthood, but one of redemption." Rightly so, Charles Spencer, Diana's brother, cautioned us against the temptation to canonize.

A life of love

Diana and Mother Teresa, "two candles in the wind," strong in spirit, fragile in life, sought to live a life of love as depicted in 1 Corinthians 13. Their deaths, tragic or peaceful, remind us that the essence of life is spiritual, and its meaning lies in love. God gives us life (spirit), and that life is for loving others, far and near. Our struggle in life is to find ways in which to do so, regardless of our status, our frailty, our distractions.

It has been said that what is most important in life, and to God, is not how life treats us, or the things that come our way. It is, rather, our response to them. "England's Rose" and the "Saint of the Slums of Calcutta" impinge on our thoughts and emotions because of *their* life response.

John Valk
Fredericton, N.B.

CRC synod shouldn't give in to trends

I have read with interest the opinions of the so-called three wise men (CC, Aug. 29) and the reaction of Mr. Klaas Terpstra (CC, Sept. 12).

I would have to agree with the Revs. Buursma, Dekker and Hofman that sufficient time should be given for deliberations and study of the issues facing the Christian Reformed Church. I do not believe that that is always possible in a one week synod. And their suggestion to reduce the number of delegates by half should be considered.

Of course there have been problems with debates which took too long. But sometimes that was, in my opinion, the result of giving too much time to the first speakers on a certain issue at the expense of later speakers whose allotted time was drastically reduced, either by a ruling of the president or a motion from the assembly.

Having been an elder delegate to Synod five times in the past 15 years I have observed that more and more matters come before synod cut and dried by the denominational board of trustees (formerly the Synodical Interim Committee) for rubber stamping.

Farmers aren't 'out of it'

The above mentioned ministers have also right in their observations that if we give in to the trend of more celebrations and pep rallies at synod it will indeed become irrelevant to the members of the pew. I also think that our classes are on that same slope after we had the Colorado conference [re: making classes more effective].

As a farmer maybe I should be offended by the observation of Mr. Terpstra about the ministers doing the debating and the farmers doing the voting, but I am not.

It is possible that he is speaking out of his narrow and limited experience of city churches. If Brother Terpstra had been or would become a member for a while of a church with a good presence of farmers he would find that they are in general all round business people. And they usually also have the wisdom to know when to speak their minds and when to mind their speech.

And finally, in our debates and in our restructuring, we as councils, classes and synods should not strive for a spiritual high for ourselves, but do our work in such a way that we minister where the rubber hits the road, namely among the members of our churches and in our communities — so that they will glorify God through us.

Hilbert Rumph
Drayton, Ont.

Quality issue by accident or design

When you come to think of it, the CC issue of August 29 is really quite exceptional.

There is thoughtful editorial comment on marriage and the quoting of that oft-forgotten traditional Reformed prayer that appears in one but not both of our forms of marriage.

Without having to turn the page, three church leaders provide a stimulating assessment, if not indictment, of synod.

Then two commentators of note (both over 60 and apparently a bit confused about the location of their permanent residence) offer a courageous exchange on the topic of sermons.

It matters not that on the personal level I agree with all of the editorial, quite a bit of the constructive evaluation of synod, and remain apprehensive self-conscious about my strong inclination to identify with the Adrianic lamentations.

What does very much matter is that you were able to produce — accidentally or by careful design — a single issue with so much meaningful, quality food for thought.

Thank you, indeed.

Ralph L. De Groot
Peterborough, Ont.

News

Agencies work to remove mines

... continued from page 1

produce many landmines that are sold to other countries.

For the past five years, World Vision has been working for a global ban on landmines. The agency also works with de-mining and mine awareness training in Angola, Mozambique and Cambodia, countries which each have more than one million mines planted on their land.

Seek total ban

The Oslo conference focused on anti-personnel mines, which World Vision says claim the lives of 26,000 innocent people each year.

Three years ago, World Vision and other Canadian agencies concerned about landmines started Mines Action Canada (MAC), a coalition based in Ottawa. Other Christian agencies that are members of MAC includes Project Ploughshares, the social affairs office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Mennonite Central Committee.

MAC's main objectives are to work for a total ban in Canada of the use, production, stockpiling, sale and export of landmines; and to contribute to Canadian policies and initiatives that provide assistance to multilateral and local humanitarian mine clearance activities.

Mary Foster, an intern with MAC, was in Oslo in early September to participate in the NGO forum on landmines. This was "an exciting environment," says Foster, who was encouraged by Axworthy's message for NGOs.

Foster notes that one NGO, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), had a seat at the main Oslo conference, something she described as "quite unprecedented." Foster agrees with ICBL's position, which is that all landmines, both anti-personnel and anti-tank, should be banned.

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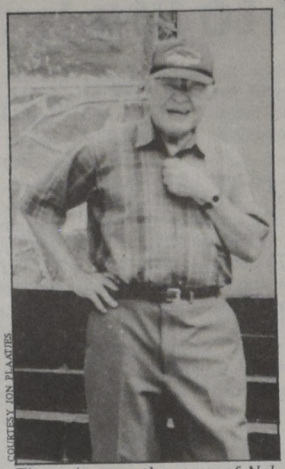
Opinion

South Africa still radically changing

My wife and I recently returned from South Africa, after having spent two and a half months there. We had a full program, as is usual whenever we revisit the country where I spent the first 50 years of my life. Our visits usually include former congregations I pastored.

A sad occasion was seeing a large remnant of our second congregation, Hertzog-Stockenstrom, which some 25 years ago had to move bodily when the whole, mostly colored, parish was declared a Black district under the old regime of the Nationalists. The congregation was scattered (shall I say, shattered?) to different towns and locations — King Williamstown, East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

The church was sold to the National Historic Commission and so we visited the bulk of the members at a place called Friemersheim, near Mossel Bay. We were able to comfort and encourage them in their sadness and loss.



COURTESY JON PLAATJES

The writer, on the steps of Nelson Mandela's former prison.

A different country

We expected to see great changes in South Africa, and we were not disappointed. Radical changes have taken place on the political, social and educational front lines.

Leading blacks have taken over the politics and education, many of them gambling with money and minds of the population. Most teachers are breathing more easily, knowing that the future of the children seem more safe in the hands of a knowledgeable White women, Mrs. Martha Olckers. It pains me to say this without prejudice.

Two things characterize the present situation: confrontation and accommodation. The new regime is doing its best (though not enough) to arrest crime and violence. It has bravely commenced to alleviate poverty and homelessness, but the problem of squatters remain. As long as the government turns a blind eye to the thousands crossing the borders illegally and joining in the ripe pickings which they don't have in their own countries, the situation may get out of hand.

Refugee haven

So South Africa is still a conflict-prone land, but there is much hope. Since we left Cape Town and the Western Province, there have been astonishing, kaleidoscopic changes. The "mother city" of South Africa, where Van Riebeeck landed in 1652, once one of the safest and best places to live, is being flooded with refugees from other provinces. They come not only from the impoverished areas (formerly black homelands) but from across the borders of Zimbabwe, Zaire, Angola and Mozambique, putting up their pitiful shacks of canvass and cardboard and odds and ends. On the way to Blauwberg Strand we came across several men pushing wheelbarrows carrying discarded boxes from factories, wooden pieces from building sites.

Land of promise

South Africa is already playing a leading role among the African nations, especially among the former members of the British Commonwealth. President Mandela and those slated to succeed him seem to play the right cards in order to gain the confidence of the world leaders, financial and trade institutions. South Africa has enormous potential.

That is why there is such an atmosphere of hope in the country, in spite of the crime statistics; in spite of the huge backlog of promises still to be fulfilled, such as housing for the millions of homeless families and work for the unemployed.

The next election, planned for 1999, is shaping up already and promises to be just as interesting as the first one of 1994.

John E. Plaatjes
Lynden, Ont.

A pro-child law change

In response to two articles about parents' right to discipline (CC, Aug. 29), let me add the following:

We all know the arguments against changing the spanking law:

- "It's not going to stop abuse anyway, and decent parents are going to be the ones ending up in courts."
- "Control is being taken away from parents, soon parents will have no rights with their own children."
- "This is just a stepping stone to deeper issues: the government wants control over what values are passed on to our children."
- "Children will be able to do whatever they want to do; there will be extended rights for children and more freedom for young people.
- "We would be encouraging wilful disobedience. What about the biblical warning about sparing the rod and spoiling the child?"

And on it goes. Many people speak of discipline for children as something that is inflicted on children rather than something that is instilled in them. What they really seem to have in mind is punishment.

Currently, young people are not given the same protection adults are given. The days in which force can be used on adults went out with the wild West and gunfights at OK Corral. Within institutions, people who use indiscriminate force can face discipline and criminal prosecution (see Jack Nicholson in *A Few Good Men*).

Children are not protected from the use of force. Section 43 of the Criminal Code reads:

Every school teacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.

The use of force is an easy thing to overdo, especially on a child. Let's move away from those methods and develop safer methods of teaching our children.

It is true that changing the law will not eliminate abuse, but I don't believe that anyone is really serious when they say decent parents will be dragged off to court. I am a parent of four elementary-aged children and on very rare occasions I have used force on my children (I regret not having found alternatives at the time). The law will not prosecute me for "light" spankings. Minor infractions of law are not prosecuted (a long standing principle in law).

Imitating what they see

There is no single influence on a child's values as great as that of their primary care givers. As long as parents are personally invested in child care, their influence will rank the highest.

Let us not worry that in the absence of force our children will not listen to what we say. Worry instead that they watch us like hawks. Children are influenced less by what we tell them than by who we are and what we do (a sobering thought). Corporal punishment teaches a child that those who have power can force others to do their will, a notion sure to influence random acts of violence throughout our nation.

Sparing the rod (as an instrument of corporal punishment) will not spoil the child. A shepherd's rod is used not only for forcing the shepherd's will on the sheep. It is also as an instrument of direction, encouragement and comfort.

Parents will discipline their children by giving them the right direction in a quiet, authoritative and convincing manner. Their task is to create situations in which effective discipline can be instilled. Although we may be annoyed when children do wrong, we ought to remember the father of the prodigal son. His way was gentle but insistent and uncompromising.

Laws which support Section 43 of the criminal code and the corporal punishment of children may harm all Canadians in the long term.

Rick Mast
Norval, Ont.

(E-mail: rick_mast@magic.ca)

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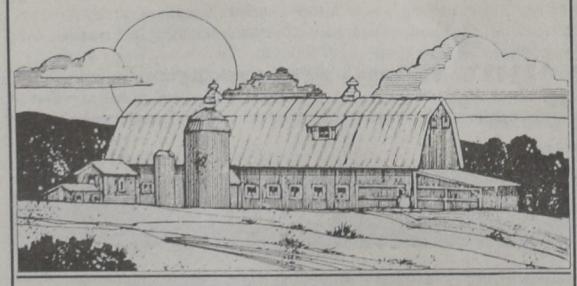

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Film Review

Ballroom dance key to unlocking these Japanese characters

Marian Van Til

Shall We Dance?

Rated PG
Stars Koji Yakusho, Tamiyo Kusakari, Naoto Takenaka. Written and directed by Masayuki Suo. In Japanese with English subtitles.

This fascinating Japanese film, which one critic has called "possibly the breakthrough foreign film of the year," explores one man's answer to a mid-life crisis which exposes to himself the enslavement of his own materialism and the pervasiveness of the materialistic spirit in Japanese society: he learns to dance.

If ballroom dancing sounds like a poor solution to spiritual and emotional emptiness, it is, of course, in ultimate terms. But on another level it can be, literally, what the doctor ordered.

It's good exercise, which in turn creates good health; it teaches one poise and grace; and more importantly, it can unleash from within a person a joy and exuberance which allows them to overcome shyness and introversion to revel in elegant body movements and compelling music. And the better one becomes at it, the more intoxicating its sense of freedom. (The title of the film comes from the popular song by that name in the Broadway hit and film *The King and I*, and gradually takes on more and more meaning.)

Dancing's for losers

For a society as reticent and controlled as Japan's, that's heady stuff. Ironically, perhaps that's why ballroom dancing is not a wholly respectable pastime in that country. A prologue tells us that in a place where husbands and wives never show displays of affection in public, and rarely tell each other "I love you," even in private, such dancing with one's spouse is highly embarrassing to most Japanese (and much more so with someone else of the opposite sex). Besides that, ballroom dancing is believed to attract mostly lecherous men who are not really interested in dancing but in picking up women.

So when the film's respectable accountant-protagonist, Mr. Sugiyama, feels himself unexpectedly drawn into this world (he can see a second-floor dance studio from the window of his train at one of the stops on his route home, and a wistful young woman always seems to be staring out the window) he doesn't dare tell anyone, not even his wife.

He is drawn by the young woman and some inexplicable yearning, not so much for her, he comes to realize, as for a life that is passing him by.

When he finally enters the dance studio, he gets a surprise — one of several. A co-worker, Aoki, has also gotten into dancing, and even participates in competitions. So, though Aoki, who is single, is rather odd (he seems to fit the stereotype) they become allies of sorts.

Masks peeled away

Bit by bit and in varying degrees the public masks are peeled) from each member of the motley group we meet in the dance studio. There's the mysterious, sometimes petulant young woman, Mai; the older, sweet-tempered woman instructor; a middle-aged woman who doesn't fit *our* stereotype of being Japanese — brash, mouthy and given to fits of temper; there's Aoki, whose irritating behavior belies a deep loneliness; there's another dance student, a chubby, introverted single man for whom dance also veils loneliness and a profound lack of self-confidence.

Then there's Sugiyama himself, who, though the main character, remains the most enigmatic. We also get to meet (and know to some extent) Sugiyama's wife and adolescent daughter and several other minor characters who are, nevertheless, important to the story.

When Sugiyama starts staying away after work, sometimes three nights a week, his wife worries. (Such behavior is both common and accepted in Japan — it's assumed one will socialize with co-workers; in fact, one's job seems to come before spouse and family. But Sugiyama is a serious fellow and not normally given to staying out late.) So his wife hires a private investigator, fearing he may be having an affair. When she finds out the truth, she is at first greatly puzzled, and almost as hurt as if he really had been having an affair.

Gentle spirit

The unusual interweaving of these characters' lives, and the gradual revealing of their vulnerable true selves, is masterful. There's a gentleness of spirit here which allows us to see the motivations of and sympathize with even the unlikable characters, all of whom have at least one or two good qualities, as real human beings do.

Shall We Dance? is also an intriguing, somewhat troubling, window on Japanese society, opened for us by the Japanese themselves in the form of these film makers.

If you don't know how to dance ballroom style, you'll leave the theatre yearning to learn.

Understanding culture through music is a 'tiny hand on peace'

AKRON, Pa. (MCC) — The *matatu* (public transport van) was already crowded when Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker Annetta Miller squeezed into a seat. Travelling to rehearse with the Nairobi Orchestra, she opened her conductor's score of Brahms' *Requiem* to review the difficult parts.

The book roused curiosity. A Kenyan man near her asked what she was looking at. And a woman, seeing the pages dotted with musical notation, whispered, "*Ni uchawi.*" Witchcraft!

Requires perception

Miller counters this story with another experience 60 years earlier when her missionary parents first arrived in Africa. Upon hearing the participatory responses and rhythmic drums characteristic of African music, they, too, designated unfamiliar music "witchcraft."

Since then, Miller has accumulated 40 years of experience living in Tanzania, Sudan and Kenya, studying and teaching others how to appreciate their own musical heritage as well as that of other cultures. She presented a paper at the Thirteenth International Kodaly Symposium for music educators in Manila, Philippines, Aug. 14 to 21.

Miller was formally educated in the Kodaly music philosophy, which holds that music education should be founded on one's own cultural music. Her paper, the third of its kind, shows how the values of African culture are reflected in the music.

"Trying to appreciate another culture's music takes time, energy and perception," Miller says. "Such music is too easily labeled 'withcraft' because we do not understand it." She explains that understanding comes by observing and participating within a culture and seeking to understand that culture's worldview.

African culture places value on inclusiveness, participation and co-operation. The Western adage "time is money" holds little value. In Africa time is about relationships. Sharing with others is paramount in building relationships.

Understanding African cultural values translates to better understanding the music. In Africa, Miller explains, music provides the "social glue" that holds relationships together. The call-and-response songs typical of sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate the importance of participation. In many southern African languages, the word for "response" in these songs is *vuma*, meaning "to agree."

Deeply embedded

Music also holds functional value in African communities, as it is used in circumcisions and funerals, for celebrations and work. In fact, "music is functional to the degree that many African languages have no distinct word for it," Miller notes."It is simply part of the human environment."

This contrasts with the modern Western view in which music often showcases a soloist. Also, Western culture views music or the ability to sing as a gift some have and others don't. An African proverb summarizes a different view: "If you can talk, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance."

OWEN FRANKEN, STOCK, BOSTON

Royal music of the Ashanti people of Ghana honors a new chief.

Since January Miller has been teaching music at Daystar University in Nairobi. Prior to this, she taught music for 18 years at Kenyatta University, also in Nairobi.

She is currently working with her students to compile, analyze and publish for educational purposes over 400 Kenyan folk songs. She hopes this effort will help Africans look to their own musical heritage as a starting point for studying music.

Miller sees her role in affirming cultural differences through music as her own approach to peacemaking. "Much of the world's conflicts are about not understanding others' cultures," she says. "This is a tiny handle on peace."

Church

Beyers Naude crafts open letter of confession for South African ministers

CC FILES

C.F. Beyers Naude

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — C.F. Beyers Naude, a long-time anti-apartheid activist and retired Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa pastor, has circulated a letter for signing by individual ministers in South Africa.

The letter will be submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to confess failures of ministers to discern the spirits properly during the apartheid era.

As more information comes out during the hearings of the TRC, the letter points out, "We as preachers of God's Word are confronted with the question: How could [apartheid] possibly have happened while we, as preachers of reconciliation, justice and peace, were preaching [those things] from our pulpits every Sunday?"

Even more disturbing, the letter continued, how could those who were murdering and sabotaging fellow citizens be members of our churches? "Was there *nothing* in our preaching, liturgies and sacraments that disturbed the consciences of those who were directly involved in all the evil deeds committed?"

Out of sight, out of mind

The letter confessed that, especially for whites, life was comfortable. So the ministers did not see the oppression. Or if "we sometimes did feel uncomfortable about the way the government and other institutions persisted in [their] abuse of power, we did nothing because of fear."

The signatories were compelled to make a choice, the letter concluded. "Either we confess our guilt in order to be set free for greater and more faithful service to the gospel of Jesus Christ, or we ignore this challenge to confess our guilt and thus declare ourselves not guilty of what happened in our country."

In addition to Beyers Naude, other signatories were Nico Smith (also a retired Uniting Reformed Church pastor), Cornell du Toit, Nico Both and T.S. Maluleke, lecturers at the University of South Africa, and Moss Nthla, general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa. The group hopes to organize a conference later for all who sign the letter.

In a personal commentary on the letter Frits Gaum, editor of *Die Kerkbode*, the official newspaper of the Dutch Reformed Church, said he would not sign the letter because he felt Beyers Naude was not equally critical of the communists with whom he worked during his anti-apartheid struggles.

Study: adults fail to pass faith on to children

GLENDALE, Calif. (EP) — Teenagers and parents are spending "little, if any, time" discussing religion, at least in the U.S., according to a study by Barna Research. In the *Barna Report* newsletter, pollster George Barna wrote that most teens are left to gather much of their spiritual perspective through "osmosis" — observation, instruction, media exposure, family tradition and peer pressure.

The result is that many teens are unaware of or lack commitment to basic Christian teachings. For instance, Barna found that 51 per cent of teens believe all people will experience the same outcome after death, regardless of spiritual beliefs.

What kind of God?

One third believe in another notion of a higher being than the God described in the Bible, including 11 per cent who say God is a "state of higher consciousness," nine per cent who call God the "total realization of all personal, human potential," and seven per cent who say there are many gods, each with its own power and authority.

Barna says that 32 per cent of teens answered questions about their faith in ways that indicated they have had a born-again experience, but 82 per cent say that religious faith is very important in their lives (close to the 87 per cent of adults who give the same response).

On the other hand, 64 per cent of teens surveyed say they believe the Bible is completely accurate in all of its teachings — their other answers belying the fact that many of them don't read it; while two-thirds say they believe in the God of the Bible.

Medical schools examine religion role in health care

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — Eight American medical schools will offer new classes on the role of spirituality and religion in health care, thanks to grants from the John Templeton Foundaton. The $25,000 grants to the medical schools will fund courses on religion, including study of the role of faith in terminally ill patients.

The grants were announced by the Templeton Foundation (which also awards an annual prize to someone whose work or research advances the cause of religion) and the U.S. National Institute for Healthcare Research.

Dr. David Larson of the institute said that while doctors were once discouraged from discussing religion or sex with their patients, now "we talk about everything except religion. The time has come."

Doctors will be taught to include a "spiritual history" of their patients, and to be aware of areas where religious beliefs might rule out certain treatments (such as the Jehovah's Witness prohibition against blood transfusions).

Patients eager for spiritual help

Though incorporating spirituality with medical care is a new idea for modern conventional medicine, it's standard practice for patients, and for alternative medicine. A survey of 268 doctors at an American Academy of Family Physicians meeting last year found that 91 per cent had patients who had asked clergy or a faith healer for help with their illness. A 1996 survey of 1,004 people by the University of Connecticut found that 64 per cent wants their doctor to pray with them.

Participating medical schools include those at Oregon Health Sciences University; Loyola (Chicago), Georgetown (Washington, D.C.) and Brown (New Hampshire) universities; the universities of Chicago, Kentucky and Rochester; and Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta.

For our Calendar of Events, please turn to page 19

FROM COAST TO COAST

ENGLISH RADIO:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan - CKAY 10:00am 1500
Burns Lake-CFLD 9:15am 1400
Kitimat-CKTK 8:30am 1230
Osoyoos-CJOR 8:00am 1490
Penticton-CKOR 8:00am 800
Port Alberni-CJAV 7:00pm 1240
Prince George-CIRX ... 7:00am 94.3
Princeton-CHOR 8:00am 1400
Smithers-CFBV 9:15am 1230
Summerland-CHOR 8:00am 1450
Vernon-CJIB 9:30pm 940

QUEBEC

Montreal - CIQC 7:30am 600

ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBQ 8:00am 1340
Ft. McMurray-CJOK 8:30am 1230
High River-CHRB 6:30pm 1280
Edmonton - CKER 11:00pm 101.9

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL 8:00am 1280
Weyburn-CFSL 8:00am 1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM 9:30am 950
Steinbach-CHSM 9:30am 1250
Winnipeg-CKJS 9:15am 810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK 9:30am 1240
Chatham-CFCO 6:30am 630
Fort Frances-CFOB 9:30am 640
Guelph - CJOY 8:30am 1460
Hamilton-CHAM 7:30am 820
Kapuskasing-CKAP 9:00am 580
Kingston-WLKC 7:30am 100.7
Newmarket- CKDX 9:30am 88.5
Oshawa-CKDO 8:00am 1350
Owen Sound-CFOS 10:30am 560
Pembroke-CHVR 10:00am 96.7
St.Catharines-CKTB 7:30pm 610
Sarnia-CHOK 7:30am 1070
Stratford-CJCS 8:45am 1240
Windsor-CKLW 8:30am 580
Wingham-CKNX 10:30am 920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm) ... 8:00am 102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ 9:30am 700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY ... 7:00am 630

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY 6:00am 1420
Kentville-CKEN 8:30am 1490
Middleton-CKAD 8:30am 1350
New Glasgow-CKEC ... 7:30am 1320
Sydney-CJCB 8:00am 1270
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Christian broadcast forms three Gypsy churches

CARY, N.C. (TWR) — What began 11 months ago as a pioneering radio outreach to one of the world's most ostracized and unreached peoples has yielded heartwarming results — three new churches among the Gypsies.

Late last October missionary broadcaster Trans World Radio (TWR) began airing programs in the Balkan Romani language, spoken by 1.5 million Gypsies in Bulgaria, the territory of the former republic of Yugoslavia, and its surrounding nations. Bulgarian church leaders said then that this radio venture was the first ever public use of media for broadcasting the Gospel to the Gypsies of Bulgaria.

These broadcasts are part of TWR's ongoing commitment to the "World by 2000" project, a co-operative venture among the major international Gospel broadcasting organizations. The project celebrates its 12th anniversary on September 10.

Not letters but churches

When a Gypsy pastor, who is helping to produce the program, met recently with TWR missionary George Cooper in Sofia, Bulgaria, he looked down and apologetically said 'No' to a question if there had been any additional letter responses to the broadcasts.

Letters are usually a reliable indicator measuring the impact a program is making. TWR receives more than 1.3 million letters a year from listeners, who live in over 160 countries. Because the vast majority of the Romany people are illiterate and nomadic, letter response has been virtually nonexistent.

However, after a moment of reflection, Pastor Ivan looked up at Cooper and added with a beaming smile, "But we have started two churches as a result of the programs!" Each of these churches has about 20 members, and Pastor Ivan has visited both.

Bible study on the train

At the same time, when he and a missionary visited a Gypsy village, 11 men who had heard the broadcasts came from a nearby village to meet him and ask questions about the Bible. And when the two took a train to Sofia, they found themselves in a compartment with six other Romany people, and together they studied the Bible throughout their six-hour journey.

A week later Cooper's visit with Pastor Ivan, news was received that a third Gypsy church has started. It, too, was a direct result of the Balkan Romani programs.

Particularly pleased is the gospel broadcast ministry "Words of HOPE," based in Grand Rapids, Mich., whose programs are being translated and adapted and then aired by TWR via a 500,000-watt AM transmitter in Albania. "If Christians from other backgrounds have no way of knowing where most Gypsies can be found, how else but by radio can the Gypsies gain ongoing access to the saving Good News of Jesus Christ," says Lee DeYoung, vice president.

God's acceptance

DeYoung explains that radio is the ideal way to touch permanently the Gypsies. Although they are accustomed to being treated like second-class citizens, or worse, by nearly everyone, DeYoung says, "Gypsies seem overwhelmed when they hear that God graciously loves them and even sent his only Son to die for them. To Gypsies, who are used to the rejection of other people, the news of God's saving love is radical Good News!"

The Balkan Romani program is just one of 86 "World by 2000" broadcasts begun since the project's inception in 1985. The goal is to provide every person on earth an opportunity by the year 2000 to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ in a language he or she can understand. In addition to TWR, broadcast ministries engaged in this global endeavour include Far East Broadcasting Company, FEBA Radio, HCJB World Radio, SIM International, Words of HOPE, and Back to the Bible.

What do you brag about?

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
● Al Wolters

"This is what the Lord says:
Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom
or the strong man boast of his strength
or the rich man boast of his riches,
but let him who boasts boast about this:
that he understands and knows me,
that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth,
for in these I delight,
declares the Lord." (Jer. 9:23-24, NIV.)

In our culture "boasting" is usually a negative concept; it's bragging or showing off, and we don't approve of it. But in the Bible it can sometimes have a positive meaning; it means something like "to glory in," "to take legitimate pride in."

This passage from Jeremiah tells us, very straightforwardly, three things: (1) what we should *not* boast about, (2) what we *should* boast about, and (3) what the *reason* for our boasting should be.

What *not* to do

Jeremiah tells us not to boast about wisdom, strength or riches. "Wisdom" here refers to practical know-how or skill. Perhaps the best modern equivalent is "expertise," whether in driving a truck, doing mental arithmetic or telling a story. We very easily become proud of the things we are good at.

The "strength" the prophet is talking about is primarily military strength or prowess, the macho strength of the "tough guy." But we all have strengths that we tend to be proud of, whatever our gender or physical bravery. All of us also feel the temptation to boast in our riches. In our materialistic society it is possessions which often give us status.

Wisdom, strength, riches — these are just examples of *anything* that we may have (mental, physical or financial) that we boast about, that we glory in, that we seek status with. The prophet might also have mentioned good looks, important friends, sex appeal or athletic ability. These are all gifts of God: fine in themselves, but no reason for boasting.

What to boast about

There is only one thing in life that is ultimately valuable, one thing that gives us true status. It is the one thing that we can boast about or glory in: *knowing God.* Of course this does not mean having information about God (although information is also included in our knowing God), but it means standing in a personal relationship of trust with him. To know God as our Savior and Lord is "the one thing needful" in human life. It is around this pivot that all of our life must revolve. It is in knowing God that we must glory.

Why boast in God?

The reason we can boast in knowing God is twofold: God's kindness and his justice. His "kindness" (the Hebrew word is *hesed*) is his grace, his covenantal love. This is the quality of God's forgiving attitude to sinners which translators have a hard time expressing.

William Tyndale, in the 16th century, invented the English word "lovingkindness" to render this Hebrew word. It is because we know God as loving and kind that we can boast in knowing him.

But we have another reason for our boasting as well: God's justice. It is by his justice and righteousness that God maintains the right, punishing the wicked and protecting the righteous. He is like a good father: he loves his children, but is also strict with them.

Finally, our passage says that God *delights* in his kindness and his justice. They are his good pleasure, they are aspects of his sovereign being, aspects of who he is. It is the very character of God to be kind and just, and that's why we can glory in knowing him.

Al Wolters teaches religion and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He specializes in Old Testament studies.

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Feature

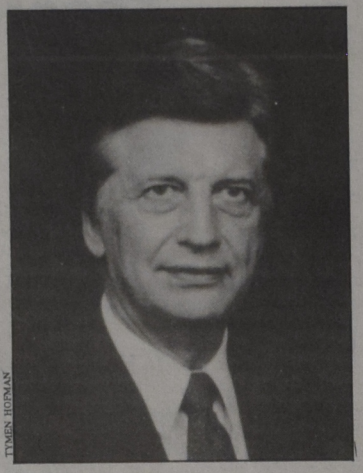
Vera and God's sovereign grace

Ty Hofman

It happened in a small casual evening service at Hope Christian Reformed Church of Oak Forest, Illinois. Rev. William Lenters had introduced a discussion of his short Lenten sermon which soon brought on a lively exchange about the obedience of Jesus in submitting himself to the judgment of God to become the Savior of the world. That led to a forthright portrayal of God as a just judge, and finally to thoughts on the judgment day.

Something I said at that point brought forth an emotional outburst from a young woman seated near me which revealed that she was not enthusiastic about a God who would put people in hell. I was amazed at what happened, since what we were talking about was nothing strange or controversial in a Christian Reformed setting. And I was not just a little disturbed that what I had said caused such a negative reaction. After all, such discussions are to bring hope and comfort to those who worship, not sharp confrontation.

I did the best I could to dampen the fire and add a bit of balm, but without much assurance of success.



TYMEN HOFMAN

Ty Hofman

> *"She even declared that if there was such a place as hell she would go there if it would save others from it. That reminded me of the Apostle Paul and his love for his Jewish people."*

As the service ended I approached the young lady and introduced myself. I found out that she was an exchange student from Hungary at Chicago Christian High School. It soon became evident that she was from a non-Christian background and was tremendously serious about finding out about the God of Christianity.

It also became evident that the image she envisioned of God was a bit as she would have him to be. That didn't leave much room for judgment or ultimate accountability. She was very emotional about it all. She even declared that if there was such a place as hell she would go there if it would save others from it. That reminded me of the Apostle Paul and his love for his Jewish people.

But she was against the whole idea. No one should so be judged. I asked her whether a person like Hitler might not qualify as a candidate for such a place. That gave her some pause for thought.

She then informed us that she desperately wanted to settle the matter of her faith in Christ before the end of the school term, since she would be going back into a non-Christian environment on her return. I asked about her contacts at school and her reading, suggested a few things that might be helpful and promised to keep in touch with her.

Sometime later I wrote her to enquire about her progress and to continue the discussion. Later in a telephone conversation she assured me that she was doing much better and was finding her way.

Self discovery

Then I sent her my copy of John R. Stott's *Basic Christianity*. I soon received a reply. After opening remarks it read:

I got your book today — thank you for sacrificing a piece of your library for me. I just read the preface, but already I know that this is the book for me. I know I am going to learn a lot from it.

I've got some other really good things to read, and great people to talk to, and I'm very grateful for this. I also know, however, that there are things I can find out and understand only by myself — or, rather, eye to eye with God himself. And these are the most important things. People can talk to me about his love, but if I don't feel it first-hand, I won't understand it ever. And it is the same the other way around — I can talk about his love, but, if the one I talk to hasn't experienced it, it will be like speaking in a foreign language.

I don't have to make other people believe; that is God's job, and if he wishes, he can use me. What I have to do is to try to keep my relationship with God as honest and clean as possible, and he will guide me in my relationship on the horizontal level.

So I don't worry so much about going home to a non-Christian environment any more. If I don't lose hold of God, he won't lose hold of me; even if I do, he will do everything to get me back.

I'm not always so wise, though, and I know there will be times yet, when I'll be walking in the shadow of doubts. I think it's a little because I'm longing for the knowledge of the whole truth, and I have the feeling that there is even more to it than what Christianity teaches. I'll have to remember these times, that God knows exactly how large portions of the truth I'm capable [of comprehending], and he'll let me know of what I have to know. I hope he won't get tired of me too much.

'Really grateful'

I believe that faith is a gift from God, and no one can get credit for his or her own faith. So even if I have faith, I am not more worthy of his love than anyone else. I'll have to remember this, too, otherwise I can easily fall into the trap of self-righteousness.

I'll also have to keep away my guilt feeling of "Why me, why not someone else?" It's God's business how he deals with others, and others' how they respond. It doesn't mean I understand more, why I am so lucky, chosen to be loved and given faith while so many seem to be without God. I just wish they could see what I see, and know what I know. I wish God made them see and understand.

However, fortunately it is not my job to save the world — it's done anyway. And I'll trust that he knows what he is doing. And I'm grateful that he cares about me.

Well the sermon is over. I'm sorry if I bored you; I know you know all this stuff. Still, thank you for the opportunity that I could write down my thoughts. It is nice to sometimes think through what I believe in. I'm really grateful that God blessed me with people like you; I pray that he will bless you with someone who is at least as useful to you as you were to me.

Thank you for your care and concern. I just want to let you know that there's no need of you worrying for me; I'm in the best hands one can be — even if those hands once were pierced to a hard, ignorant piece of wood....

She also enclosed a separate page with this note:

I don't have anything to give you; I thought I would send you some of my poems. The one on the other side won third place in the fine arts festival in school. They may not be great professional pieces of art; still, I send them with much love. Vera.

I'm happy I had the opportunity to get to know this beautiful young believer on her road to discovering the fullness of life in Christ. I marvel at her fine grasp of the faith so newly found. It gives me hope for other dedicated seekers.

And I write this story hoping that it may inspire others to reach out to a seeking world, praying they may be as richly rewarded as I have been in coming to know Vera.

Tymen E. Hofman is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

East of the Eden (the song of Adam)

I think of you some mornings
when tired sun climbs up the sky,
and every now and then I cry,
trying to fix my broken wings.

And the well-known smell of things
that used to make you and me smile
comes back to me, but I can't fly
over my life's still burning ruins.

But you promised a greater love,
an offspring to crush Satan's head,
and although you are far above,

I know that you will stretch your hand
through sin and blood and pain and flood.
Still, long's the way, and cursed's the land.

Vera Tanczos

Feature

Letters to Shi-kai

Wybe Bylsma

As on the previous page, the author here witnesses to his faith in Christ by sharing it with a young foreign student who was struggling to find spiritual direction.

March 5, 1996

Dear Shi-kai,

I appreciate your interest in wanting to learn more about the Christian faith. It seems that from the time you were a teenager you were already attracted to what your mother taught you about God and about serving him. At the same time you experienced confusion and anger about practices that you considered inconsistent with a strong faith.

All this took place in an atmosphere of stifling communist indoctrination and chaotic community living in which all standards of healthy human behavior were eliminated. No wonder you were confused and angry.

Indecision

Also, you became very skeptical about building your life on a solid foundation of faith because what you had seen of the Christian faith was seemingly so contradictory, and what you had experienced as a result of the communist faith left you totally disillusioned. Years later, you still seem unable to make a definite decision as to which faith direction you should embrace.

This indecision also robs you of motivation in the nitty-gritty of life. You don't really know what to do with yourself, how to use your time. You feel lonely, disoriented, uninspired, unmotivated, but you don't know what to do about this disconcerting situation. You would like to experience clarity of vision, joy and enthusiasm in pursuing a specific goal that gives your life hope and zest and meaning. Instead you feel burdened by indecision, by a lack of quality relationships in which you can share yourself at a greater depth than with the superficial friends, and perhaps by habits you don't feel proud of.

Men face problems

Over the years I have learned that as men we are generally impoverished in understanding ourselves and others. As men we do not open up very easily to talk about the hurts buried in the hidden depths of our hearts, about the emotional pain that we had to endure from family members and friends who were not always careful in trying to understand us, to encourage us, to build us up.

Also as men we face difficulties in understanding women. Scientists are finally catching up with a fact that people have been aware of for millennia: men and women are different. We are very similar in many ways, yet also very much unlike each other in feeling and thinking. Lack of awareness of our differences can create misunderstandings that may create tensions and possibly separation between husbands and wives.

Usually no one teaches us about such problems when we are younger. We men frequently miss wholesome role models and mentors who can help us become more aware of ourselves, our feelings and our relationship with others. We often have to struggle in silence, nursing our confusion until it becomes an acrid bitterness deep within our souls, producing a volcano of anger that explodes periodically, often reducing future possibilities of healing, of nurturing male tenderness, of mending broken relationships.

The unloved father

I would like to share with you some excerpts from a book that I read last year when I organized a seminar on father-son relationships.

For men to feel empowered, to come to terms with our own identities and deal honestly with our wives, our children, and the demands of careers, means healing the wounded father within, an angry-sad version of ourselves that feels unloved and unlovable. That means coming to terms with that distorted person we never knew well enough: father.

[At this point Bylsma provides lengthy quotations from the book Finding our fathers: how a man's life is shaped by his relationship with his father *by Samuel Osherson, a Harvard psychologist who had the opportunity to study the lives of many leading male Harvard graduates around the U.S.]:*

Shi-kai, I don't know whether my remarks are helpful to you, but I felt I had to share these. If Osherson should still be at Harvard, it might be worthwhile for you to see him sometimes while you are there. I sincerely hope that you will gain certainty as far as foundational faith commitment and life direction is concerned. May God give you hope, zest, joy and wisdom also in time management.

Your friend,
Wybe

July 12, 1997

Dear Shi-kai,

It was a pleasure to meet with you again last Sunday evening at David and Mary's place. I always enjoy the openhearted discussions and frank questions that you fire at me. And don't worry, I won't take any of them ill of you.

As you well know, I cannot answer all your burning questions. Some of them puzzle me as much as they do you. I, too, get angry sometimes with God for being this hidden presence in the world, who seems not clearly to provide us with the transparency of understanding that we crave *while he can very easily do so.* If he is so powerful, why does he allow evil to flourish so blatantly, so viciously? If he loves us so much, why does he not protect us more from the horrid temptations that creep up to us? Why does he not make himself more visible?

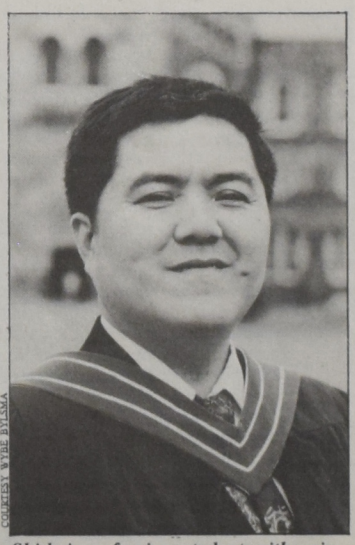
Why can we not feel his spirit poking us in the ribs or actually whispering something in our hearts? Instead, our constant whys just seem to hang there like immobile icicles that eventually either melt away or shatter in tinkling pieces onto the sidewalk.

Will miracles continue?

On the other hand, when he did make himself visible in and through Jesus, helping blind people to see again, feeding thousands of hungry followers with only a few loaves of bread and a pound or so of fish, straightening out the crippled limbs of some, and even telling a dead teenager who was being carried to the cemetery to get up and play baseball or soccer again, some of those watching these unbelievable events happen right before their very eyes still were not convinced.

And certainly in our advanced age of scientific sophistication and vastly enlarged storehouses of knowledge and deft expertise, we'd definitely want plenty of carefully controlled experimentation before we would be willing to overcome our raw skepticism

Continued on page 12...



COURTESY WYBE BYLSMA

Shi-kai: a foreign student with spiritual questions.

Features

Two poems by David Trembley

The Hare's Reply

O, Hound of Heaven, you wildman of the desert
Fierce iconoclast, root-ripping obsession
We will tame you, tie you down
teach the children to trust our death
rather than you bewildering excess and enthusiasm.

Swirling energy, whirlpool of focused passion
You enigmatic bearer of the most profound paradox
We would rather sleep, doze dumbly in sullen despair
and wait for some other savior

You gut-wrenching sob of a wounded mother
We do not want to be cleansed in your crying
Ah, the sweet comfort of dying
drowning in bottled water
smothered by air conditioning
wrapped in the womb-tomb of virtual community

Howling wind of incessant creativity, flaming explosion on the sun
Give us a gentle breeze and somewhere safe to tend our candle
Your awful freedom is a great deal more than we can endure
Go away now so we can write ourselves some comforting little rules

Go back to your desert, your harlots, your passion
Return to your cosmic ineffability and release us to contend with
the dull thud, the pathetic whine of our everyday lives

Enough, Lord Jesus. We have seen enough of your intensity
Leave us to our daycare centres
retirement communities, assembly lines
We do not like kairos-time. We much prefer the clock
tick-tocking our way, grain by grain, from here to there
in a predictable line, always going to jail
when we land on that square
and never ever really passing Go

Away, Lord Jesus
It is naptime, siesta, Happy Hour
Your celestial celebration is more than we bargained for

We much prefer the part of elusive prey
Running from you in the ruts of our routine
is greatly more satisfying than being caught

Or else the illusion of being ourselves the pursuers
So long as we do not have to run too hard
So long as there is no danger whatsoever
that we shall ever need to catch our quarry
or that any of our habits will ever have to change

Take back your invitation, O king of fools
Leave us to the consequences of our choices
slow, careful, easy rotting unto death alone

Alicia

How well scrubbed you were! I heard the undertaker telling
He said he had never prepared the body of a child that was so clean
Your mother's insistence of course. Even playing in the driveway
She insisted you take a bath and brush your teeth and hair

What girlish games were transpiring inside your head, my daughter
How could you not have seen — at least heard — the town truck
Rumbling up the hill? What possessed you to be such a grief
To dear old Mr. Henderson? His life is empty now. There are

Not enough years for him to recover. Or for me or your mother
We look at even others' children more lightly now, much less
Those of our own who remain. Your sisters and brothers who will soon
Have forgotten you. I am going to forget you too, Alicia. Your going

Has left me unable to believe in anything, except for
Dear old Mr. Henderson and his endless tears.

David Trembley is pastor of an inner-city congregation in Milwaukee, Wisc., associated with the American Baptist Church. He also teaches writing at Milwaukee Brea Technical College.

Letters to Shi-kai

... continued from page 11

should we be faced with such evidence. In our resistive, rebellious state, we will probably always come up with even more doubts and new troubling questions that we want satisfied before committing ourselves.

Trusting approach

This time as we met I did not notice as many angry flare-ups toward your mother on your part. Have you come to terms with some of the bitterness that you experienced in the past for which you may have blamed her? Perhaps a new attitude toward her may also help clear the way toward accepting God the Father more readily. The discord in our relationship with those whom we can see also spills over into our relationship with the One we do not see.

Furthermore, Shi-kai, no matter how many questions bubble up in our fertile minds, we need to come to God in the same spirit as a trusting child comes to his or her daddy and reaches out for his strong, comforting hand, allowing him to lead through unfamiliar or perhaps threatening surroundings.

I hope that you are now at the point where you can say, "God, I want to know you. I want so much to experience your presence. I want you to take hold of me and to guide my life. I surrender myself to you, even though I have lots of angry questions and face frustrating problems. My Dad in heaven, I don't fully fathom your ways, but I know that you exist. Yet, I don't want merely to acknowledge your existence. I really want to relate to you. I fervently want to love you. I genuinely want to treat you as my wonderful father. Much more, I want to dedicate my whole life to serving you. I don't know how, but please take me, accept me, love me, hold my hand, Dad."

Right with God

Accept the fact, Shi-kai, that Jesus — also described as God's "suffering Servant" — willingly sacrificed himself and rescued us from our rebellion and hollow self-centredness, from our self-righteousness and hopeless stubbornness, from our miserableness and swaggering sense of autonomy. Trust him as the one to make you right with God, to give you hope, deep inner joy and inspiration to minister to others. Knock on his door and he will open himself up to you.

Soon you expect to take up your vocation teaching law at one of China's universities. You will have a great influence on the life of your many students. Make sure that your commitment to honoring God in your teaching is very firm. Let the Word of God be your constant guide, shaping your life in such a way that others can see him in your lifestyle and hear him in your lectures. When we serve him in concrete ways, we are involved in making him visible to those who don't know him. May you firmly commit yourself to him.

I hope we will meet again before you leave Canada. Enjoy your Canadian summer.

Your friend
Wybe

Wybe Bylsma is a real estate agent and former teacher who makes determined efforts to build bridges with foreign students in his area of Cobourg, Ont.

Home calling

John Krueger

We settled in the car like spies in front of the war-time duplex, snooping for clues that we had once lived there so long ago. The stark fact was not enough. I flipped open some tattered photos to help Mom get past the new paint job and skylight window. So much had changed. It was Fall 1991, three decades since we had moved from this home in Chatham, Ont.

A stranger popped out of the front door and climbed into a car parked in our old driveway. We wanted to run up and tell him that this was our home, too, and show him the photos to prove it. Maybe then he would invite us inside. But we didn't. My mother grew silent as we sat together. No words fit the ache — only tears. Holy water.

A small boy rode past us on his bike. Suddenly I was back in the '50s, riding my bike down to Jeanette's Variety at the corner. I skidded to a stop and joined my buddies. We chomped wads of gum, shuffled pictures of our heros — Berra, Mantle and Mays — chanting the liturgy, "Got him; got him; don't got him."

The kid zoomed past our car again as Mom broke the silence. "Do you remember your babysitter, Winnie Groen, who lived right there?" Mom pointed a gnarled hand to the adjoining duplex. My memory of Winnie has faded just like our photo of Mom and her locking hands as I sat across their arms. Feet dangling and caught in a giggle. A picture from our days on Sunnyside.

We glanced again at our old home, then drove away. I'm glad we spent the time recalling my childhood days. Ten months later Mom died of a sudden illness. In the years following her death I often thought about my childhood in Chatham. Then in 1995 I heard that *Winnie* still lived there, and her son was going to enrol at the college where I worked.

❀ ❀ ❀

A knock at my office door: "There's someone in the foyer who really wants to meet you." I knew it was Winnie. From down the hallway she looked like a stranger. As I got closer I remembered her eyes from the photos. Her hug was a bridge across time.

Reunions like this have been known to happen. But I also heard she moved to the other side of the duplex wall — where I once lived! A move of about one foot.

Winnie invited me to visit my old home. I'd see it from the inside this time. A prayer was answered as I walked through the doorway to my childhood. The reverie of that day bound

KEN HEYMAN

"My memory of Winnie has faded just like our photo of Mom and her locking hands as I sat across their arms."

my tongue and set me reeling. I stood in disbelief like Zechariah, and then dumbfounded as memories danced about me. Sitting in that small living room for the first time in 35 years, I drifted back to the '50s again.

I'm watching Soupie Sales on the snowy TV screen. Then headlights shine through the curtains. Daddy's home. I hear the heavy Chev door clunk and the keys clink. "Whadya got for me, Dad?" I prance around him like a puppy and rummage through his overcoat. "Johnny, try the other pocket," he grins. I clutch a lollypop and shove it into my mouth. Dad takes off his coat. Then I clamp onto his big foot and ride it like a merry-go-round in this little room where I'm now making small talk.

"John, would you like some more coffee?" I resurface and fumble through conversation.

❀ ❀ ❀

Memories continued to peer through the windows and pitter-patter on the stairs. I was seized by an urge to touch objects from my past, to run my fingers over them, to read my history like braille. The bathroom seemed like a safe place. I excused myself, walked down the hall and shut the door. I grasped the same faucets and ran my fingertips along the same tub I touched as a child. My hands knew the porcelain curves and metal texture. I carried the imprints back to the living room, wrapped those hands around Winnie while I said goodbye.

Walking out the front door I glanced at the spot where Mom and I had parked on the road years ago. Since that time Mom had crossed a greater threshold. Now, in our own way we had both gone home. I thought about our day together, how we returned here like two homing pigeons.

I realize now that our home called us to itself, then pointed us beyond to a truer home, to a place we had never seen but always knew in our longing. Nostalgia can be made holy. Through this humble duplex, deep has called to deep. One home has called us to another.

John Krueger is a career and placement co-ordinator at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Heaven at the Holiday

Roxanne Rupke

I saw a bit of heaven last Saturday night, in an unlikely spot. There were no majestic mountains or rushing waterfalls — I was at the Holidome, the swimming pool and recreation area at the top of a local Holiday Inn.

We had been given one of those clear moments when heaven opens for a second and love spills out.

My friend's family invited two friends and I to join them on the fifth floor for a celebration of her birthday. We spent a lackadaisical afternoon drifting from one activity to another: a game of cards, a dip in the pool, some putting with a plastic golf ball on artificial turf, a pizza dinner, and afterwards, presents.

When all the presents were opened, three of us went for another swim. The pool had been full of children earlier; we hoped it would be emptier. But when we got closer, we saw that the pool was more glutted with kids than ever — dozens of kids, screaming and laughing maniacs.

Joining in

We walked past the pool to the hot tub, but the water was being emptied from it. I decided to brave the child-invested waters, and my friends followed.

Once in the pool, I realized the children were playing a game with a beachball. Not just a few of them: all of them were playing together. Kids of many sizes, shapes, colors and ages were joined in game of keep-away, girls against the boys.

Chaos. Screams echoed off the stucco walls, and no one could hear anyone. My friends and I did the smartest thing we could do. We joined in.

Suddenly the girls' team had a distinct advantage: three college-aged madwomen on their side. The game grew wilder, and our initially controlled shouts became the shrieks of childish abandon. The game changed into a volleyball match, but no one could decide whose turn it was to serve or how many points had been scored.

A boy had the idea to create a whirlpool. Everyone moved along the pool walls, striding and dog-paddling, pushing the water with our collective force until we had created a churning current that carried us along. The younger children clung to the hands, necks, and backs of the bigger ones, screeching to each other. A little black girl named Crystal hung her arms round my neck. Later I gave a dark-haired girl named Abigail a ride, bouncing her so she clunked up and down like an apple that is too heavy for a bobbing branch. The pool was a mess of bodies bumping and pushing and hanging on to each other, all carried round and round with the whirling water. More screams, laughter and shouting.

Pure play

My friends and I were finding something we had missed for many years without knowing it: play, pure creative play. Everyone could play, and together the play became a joyous communal expression of delight, freedom and creativity.

Later when my friends and I talked about the whirlpool, we said we knew we would never forget it. Somehow it was a glimpse of heaven. We had been given one of those clear moments when heaven opens for a second and love spills out.

If only we could have heaven in our hearts and minds more often. When we see with the eyes of heaven, everyone is beautiful, washed clean by love. When we speak with the words of heaven, our tongues are free to speak words that heal and build. When we move our bodies in time with heavenly music, we are free to rejoice in creation and Creator.

This story appeared in the Calvin College Chimes, *Feb. 7, 1997, when Roxanne Rupke was its editor. She now works as a journalist in Grand Rapids, Mich.*

B.C. Supreme Court upholds Trinity Western standards

College of Teachers must certify TWU teacher ed program

LANGLEY, B.C. (TWU) — B.C. Supreme Court Justice W.H. Davies has ordered the B.C. College of Teachers to approve Trinity Western University's application for accreditation of its teacher education program.

The decision was handed down Sept. 11 in a 54-page ruling that will make it possible for Trinity Western teacher education students to take their fifth and final year of education at the university rather than having to transfer to another accredited university.

TWU not discriminatory

The main issue in the dispute was the university's "community standards" document. When applying for admission to TWU, all students are required to sign a community standards agreement which states they will abstain from premarital sex, adultery or homosexual activity while attending the university.

The BCCT contended the policy "follows discriminatory practices which are contrary to the public interest and public policy," and that graduates may be biased against homosexual students in the classroom.

Justice Davies concluded that "such a premise is inherently flawed because it requires many unfounded assumptions." He noted that when the BCCT made its decision, it didn't have to guess as to whether TWU graduates were biased, as there was solid evidence before it that they were not.

He also pointed out that "since large numbers of the TWU graduates are teaching in the public school system, it would have been possible to determine if there had been any incidents of intolerance."

Added the judge, "It is apparent that the [BCCT] failed to consider the evidence which was before it, for had it done so, it could not have reached the decision it did. I find the decision to have been made without any reasonable foundation."

In the evidence provided to the court, the university underlined the fact that the decision by students to sign the Trinity Western community standards agreement is voluntary, and that students who choose to attend Trinity Western generally do so because they are looking for a Christian environment in which to conduct their studies. Vice-president Guy Saffold added, "We don't ask them about their sexuality when they apply, and we trust that people will act with integrity toward the commitment they have made to the standards of our community."

Saffold says there were only eight qualifications the BCCT's approval team had originally outlined for approval of TWU's program, including having sufficient library resources, an adequate number of faculty, and that students would have an opportunity to practise in public-school classrooms. "We are supportive of those rulings and we can meet all of them," said Saffold.

Trinity Western's teacher education program began in 1985. A proposal for the university to operate the final year of its teacher education program was first tabled with the B.C. College of Teachers in January 1988. In late 1994, criteria for approving such programs were established.

More than 200 students are currently involved in Trinity Western's teacher education program. The 35-year-old Langley, B.C.-based Christian university serves 2,500 students and is entirely funded through tuition fees and private donations.

Calvin College to host Melanchthon conference

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Reformed Christians may remember, if vaguely, the name Philipp Melanchthon from church history studies of the Reformation period. Melanchthon was a 16th century Reformer who is now not nearly as well remembered as Calvin and Luther. The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College would like to correct that.

The Meeter Center will sponsor a one-day Melanchthon conference on October 11 which will bring together four speakers for a scholarly examination of this great Reformer. The event will be one of many taking place worldwide in this fall to acknowledge the 500th anniversary of Menlanchthon's birth.

Karin Maag, a native of Montreal and the new director of the 16-year-old Meeter Center says a closer look at the German Reformer is a natural for the Meeter Center, despite its specific emphasis on studying John Calvin.

"Melanchthon and Calvin were actually closer contemporaries than Calvin and Luther," Maag explains. "He's known as the strongest supporter of education in Germany, where he was instrumental in developing their university system. To understand Calvin you need to have an awareness of what other Reformers were doing at the time."

Influenced John Calvin?

Helping to explain the relationship between Calvin and Melanchthon will be Dr. Timothy Wengert of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and Dr. Richard Muller of Calvin Seminary.

Wengert will begin the conference with a look at 29 known exchanges between Calvin and Melanchthon. Says Wengert, "These leading Reformers constructed a literary friendship that successfully papered over their differences, while at the same time revealed to the careful reader the significant divide between them."

Muller will respond with a look at Calvin's famous *Institutes* and argue that, despite their disagreements, Calvin learned much of the method, albeit less of the actual content, of the *Institutes* from Melanchthon.

Following those two talks, Dr. Lyle Bierma of Reformed Bible College (RBC) in Grand Rapids will discuss Melanchthon's connections to the *Heidelberg Catechism*, arguing that evidence of Melanchthon's influence on the structure, tone and theological content is unconvincing.

Finally, Dr. John Schneider, on leave from the Calvin College religion department, will look at Melanchthon's life before he became Luther's protege. "While he lacked the charisma of Luther's genius, the direction of our grading of Philipp Melanchthon as a teacher of Scripture and Protestant doctrine must be upwards," says Schneider.

For more information call the Meeter Center at (616) 957-7081, or visit the website at: www.melanchton.de/e/

Pedagogeries

Alyce Oosterhuis

A calm duck furiously paddling

We were discussing metaphors to describe our verbal images of teaching. Some of the images were wonderful: an apparently calm duck paddling furiously below the water; a shifting sand hill moving unpredictably as a person ascends and descends it; a roller coaster twisting wildly before coming to a tranquil halt; an ocean with its alternatively lapping and crashing waves; a chess game in which every move brings new possibilities; a game of golf in which one plays in the rough most of the day but suddenly scores an exhilarating hole-in-one.

Clearly each metaphor recognized the ups and downs of teaching: the difference an individual, a single moment, or one successful lesson can make a day.

Beginning and end most alike

Since the students in this class are all future elementary/junior high school teachers, I asked them if the metaphors would be different if they were training to be secondary teachers. The majority believed that the metaphors would change, just as they would be different if they were thinking of college teaching.

And yet as we reflected further, it struck me how elementary school metaphors are not so different from college metaphors, because the primary emphases are on motivation, intrigue, issues, the whole child/whole subject picture.

I do not worry extensively about "covering every detail and topic" in the allotted time of each course's classes. Students can read about what has not been touched upon during lectures. Students can ask when they do not understand or need assistance. Co-operative learning and peer tutoring occur frequently at elementary and college levels.

But how often does it occur at secondary levels that teachers feel driven to teach all the content of a given course because if it has not been "covered" in class, our senior high school students will not do well on their final departmental exams? And since the most efficient, though not effective, way to "cover" the material is by using the lecture method, how many secondary teachers find themselves speaking and board-writing faster and faster as the school year progresses?

Ironic method

It is an irony of our teaching practices that those who need the challenge of the golf or chess game, the roller coaster extremes, the furious duck calm, and the crashing ocean waves' roar the most, probably experience it the least.

The high school students who chafe at the compulsory education laws, who search out change for the sake of variety, who throw their whole beings into their music and video watching, probably experience more lecturing and note-taking than many college students.

And when one considers that teaching and learning are part of the same process, then from the perspective of the high school student there are few ups and downs, shifting sands, exhilarating moments.

It makes me stop and think about what metaphors we should be developing to keep teaching and learning a vital challenge for all students.

Alyce Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Questions about Jesus' nature

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

We confess that God is omnipresent. Does this apply to Jesus in the same way? Was his Spirit still in heaven while he lived on earth?

Dear Questioning Theologian:

It isn't very often that we get theological questions. We'll be glad to give your questions a try.

The Word became flesh without ceasing to be the Word. The divine nature assumed "the very nature of a servant" without ceasing to be "in very nature God" (Phil. 2:6). The omnipresent Son of God limited himself to a local ministry in Israel while still holding all things together (Col. 1:17). The One who knew hearts, read thoughts and healed at a distance gave up the ability to predict the hour of his return and yet remained one with the Father. So the answer to your question is Yes.

And No. For the idea of omnipresence does not apply to Jesus in the same way as it does to God the Father. That's because Jesus, unlike our Heavenly Father, is the only person of the Trinity who has "two natures united in a single person, with each person retaining its own distinct properties" (*Belgic Confession,* Art. 19). Simply understood, in his divine nature Jesus was omnipresent in heaven and on earth and in his human nature he was limited to body, place and time.

If this answer seems quite illogical, attribute that to the fact that we are dealing with the mystical math which applies to the things of God. After all, if we can accept the fact that Scripture teaches that there is one God, yet three distinct persons, why not also accept the teaching that Jesus is 100 per cent fully divine (*vere deus* — true God) and 100 per cent fully human (*vere homo* — true man) with all the accompanying attributes, even if it happens to add up to an unmathematical 200 per cent!

Having said all this, do we understand any of it? Not really. But we believe it and take great comfort in a Savior who gave up all in his humanity while retaining all in his divinity. The practical implication of this is the simple belief that Jesus' rule, at all times, including his 33 years on earth, extends from heaven to every human heart which acknowledges him as King.

Dear P & M:

Could you tell me what Jesus really means in Matt. 26:29 when he says, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom"?

Dear Questioning Bible Student:

With these words, Jesus identifies himself with Moses and the Exodus. On the night of the first Passover, the Israelites ate lamb prepared with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. As they left Egypt the people took unleavened dough carried on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing.

The implication was clear. Tonight we eat in bondage; the next time we eat it will be in freedom. And it was so. The meal that was eaten once in Egypt has been eaten more times than the Jews can count in Israel.

Similarly, Jesus raised a chalice of wine and reassured the disciples that regardless of what lay ahead, freedom and communal meals in the Father's coming kingdom were just around the corner. They needed to understand, however, that this was not an exodus from Roman-ruled Israel to Jewish-ruled Israel. Instead, as the Messiah, he would lead them from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light, from satanic bondage to citizenship in God's Kingdom. Matt. 26:29 is Christ's certain declaration to fearful, doubting followers that he would emerge victorious from the coming battle.

Christ's words were fulfilled *immediately* at the meals during which he revealed himself to his followers after his resurrection (e.g., eating bread in Emmaus; eating broiled fish in Jerusalem, sharing bread and fish by the Sea of Tiberias). His words are fulfilled *continually* at the church's communion services when believers celebrate Christ's promised passing over from death to life. His words will be fulfilled *exhaustively* upon his return or after our death (whichever comes first), when we will raise our goblets with him at the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Jesus words, by the way, also remind us that his kingdom and our resurrection is an experience that will include food and drink, taste and smell. Those of us who wonder whether or not the New Earth will be a boring existence will do well to take note of Christ's hearty appetite. So here's to a coming kingdom where we will eat and drink with gusto, not because of a physical need to live but from a spiritual desire to celebrate what Jesus has accomplished for us.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Never surrender to death

H.A. Visser

There are times in your life that you're inescapably confronted with death — the death of someone else, or your own death.

Last night, someone in great despair phoned me and said, "I'm no longer able to visit someone who's very seriously ill, because it's too much for her. I want to write her, but I can't. What should I write? If I could visit her, I could at least hold her hand. But now, I don't know what to say."

Someone else wrote: "I feel terribly guilty that I'm not visiting this seriously ill person, but I don't dare. What can I say to him?"

And another: "It's been a year since I lost my husband, and now I push away all memories of that. Isn't this cowardly?

And a fourth person, who himself is very ill, said, "How can I prepare for the future? I can't and I don't want to think that this might be the end."

I would say today that you're not alone thinking these thoughts. We prefer to avoid death and thoughts of death, especially thoughts of our own death. However understandable this may be, it is a kind of hide-and-seek game. It's better to know that death is part of life that one should keep it in mind, than to run away endlessly.

Death is the enemy

That does not mean that we should consider death ordinary. I believe that would be another attempt to escape its reality. The Bible does not see death as anything normal. It is our enemy, and God's enemy. Just like the word "devil" as title of God's greatest opponent in this world in fact means spoilsport, we may see death, too, as a mean force which attacks God's good creation and destroys everything that's beautiful.

That's why we must know that we're on God's side in the fight against death. The doctors, nurses and scientists who fight for the life of a sick person, even though they say they don't believe a thing, all in their honest fight stand against death and on God's side.

And thus we should, even when we're sick and we know it may end in death, fight alongside the doctor and the care givers as God's troopers.

I believe that real spiritual care for the sick does not consist of preparing the sick person for death, but for life. And even if death should win, we should never experience that as a form of capitulation.

Never capitulate

When after the five-day war of 1940 the Dutch gave up the battle, for the real Netherlander this was not capitulation. We kept on fighting.

May I use this example for being ill and dying? We may have to give up the battle, but spiritually we must never capitulate. It's essential that we carry God's banner into his hands.

I'm thinking of someone who's no longer here, but who during her serious illness, whenever she was able to enjoy life, would say, "At least I was allowed to experience this yet."

I know, it can be extremely heavy sometimes. There can be moments that you say, "I don't need this anymore." You can long for the end with such intensity. But even then you don't have to capitulate, because God is not a God of the dead but of the living. We don't surrender to death, but we ask God, who is stronger than death (after all, Christ did arise), if he will continue the battle for us.

We don't say, "Death, into your hands I commit my spirit," but "Father, into *your* hands I commit my spirit."

When you live fighting like that, when you die fighting like that, then there suddenly is room for saying goodbye. It'll be a parting during which — how is it humanly possible? — you can let go of everything, because life, not death, awaits you. Then your day of death becomes your birthday. The struggle is over.

And before you know it the word "joy" passes over someone's lips.

Translated by Bert Witvoet from a Dutch radio talk.

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Contact: **Andy Borger**
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Birthday

REITSMA:
On October 4, 1997
JACOBA REITSMA
(nee SNYDER)
will celebrate her 90th birthday.
We pray that God will continue to bless our mother and grandmother with health and happiness.
With love from your family:
Fred & Helen Reitsma — Brantford, Ont.
Kim — Hamilton, Ont.
Jacinda — Waterloo, Ont.
Lesley — Grand Rapids, Mich.
Angela — at home.
Meghan — at home.
An open house will be held on Sunday, Oct.5, 1997, from 2-5 p.m. at 739 Colborne St., Brantford, Ont.
Home address: 40 Mohawk Rd.E., Apt.#101, Hamilton, ON L9G 2A7

Anniversaries

With gratitude and praise to God, we announce the **25th Anniversary** of our dear husband and father,
JOHN POSTUMA
as a minister of the Gospel in the Christian Reformed Church. John has faithfully served congregations in Ottawa, Welland, and Waterdown, and is currently the pastor of the Maranatha C.R.C. in York.
1 Corinthians 2:2 continues to be his aim in ministry:
"For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."
Love from Marge and your children Ted, Christine, Michelle, Laura and Sarah.
Correspondence address:
288 Morrison Drive, Caledonia, ON N3W 1A6.

Dresden, Ont. 1957 London, Ont.
On October 11, 1997, the Lord willing, we
JAKE and ANN VANDERLEEUW
(nee OKKEMA)
hope to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary with our children and grandchildren:
Julie & Richard Schilstra — Dunnville
Jason, Kimberly, Corey, Brittney
Gary & Marlene Vanderleeuw — London
Gregory, Kevin, Eric
Sylvia & Scott MacKenzie — London
Austin, Megan
Elaine & Frank Desando — London
Alexandria, Sydney
Home address: 58 Snowdon Cr., London, ON N6E 1G4

Anniversaries

65th anniversary!

Beetgum, Fr. Brampton, Ont.
1932 September 22 1997
"The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still continue; Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise. The Lord is all I have, and so in him I put my hope." (Lam. 3:22,23.)

LIEUWE and MAARTJE WASSENAAR
(nee BOERSMA)
We are forever grateful for their dedication and loyalty.
Andy (deceased 1995) & Emmy Wassenaar — Sarnia
Siek & Tina Wassenaar — Stouffville
Vivian & Klaas De Jong — Wyoming
Sy & Mary Wassenaar — Toronto
Kathy Wassenaar (deceased 1968)
Willem & Rosemary Wassenaar — Toronto
Tena Wassenaar — Toronto
18 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.
Home address: Holland Christian Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., #C 1101, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7.

Oosterhesselen, the Neth., 1947 Smithville, Ont. 1997
In thankfulness for God's steadfast love, we are happy to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,
FYTJE WIELINK (VAN HUIGENBOS) and CORNELUS WIELINK
on September 30, 1997.
We thank them for their love and support. God bless them and us in the years ahead.
From your
10 children and their spouses
27 grandchildren (16 married)
35 great-grandchildren.
Home address: General Delivery, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0.

Obituaries

July 25, 1913 - September 6, 1997
The Lord took home
HELENA DRAGSTRA
(nee DE RUYTER)
beloved wife of the late Theunis Dragstra.
Dear mother of:
Rena & Bill Kolkman — Londesborough, Ont.
John Dragstra — Goderich, Ont.
Martha Herriot — Victoria, B.C.
Loving grandmother and great-grandmother of
Robert & Lissa Kolkman (Leticia, Kurtis, Marlayna),
Stephen Kolkman, Katrina, John, Tanis and James Herriot.
The funeral service was held at Trinity Chr.Ref.Church, Goderich, Ont. on Monday, Sept.8, 1997, Rev. Jack Quartel officiated.
Correspondence address:
John Dragstra, R.R.2, Goderich, ON N7A 3X8.

Obituaries

"But now, this is what the Lord says, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.'"
(Isaiah 43:1,2)
KLAAS (CLARENCE) HUIZINGA
age 59, was peacefully called home to be with his Lord and Savior, on Monday August 25, 1997.
Beloved husband of Grace Huizinga (nee Feddema).
Dear father of:
Mike & Evelyn Huizinga — Wyoming
Clarence, Christopher, Tylor, Bradley
Jack & Joanne Huizinga — Watford
Kyle, Lysa
Freda & Steve Schaafsma — Fergus
Karen, Jamie, Robert, Timothy
Jeanette & Mel Nywening — London
Matthew, Amy, Nathan
Elaine & Bob Vrolyk — Sarnia
Paul Huizinga — at home.
The funeral service was held at the Christian Reformed Church of Wyoming, Ont., on August 28, 1997, Rev. Ken Benjamins officiating.
Correspondence address:
Grace Huizinga, R.R.1, Petrolia, ON N0N 1R0

Nov.11, 1900 Sept. 11, 1997
After a lengthy journey through life, God has taken to Himself his child
FRANCES (FEMMIGJE) MORAAL -STEENBERGEN
Predeceased by her husband, Johannes, and lovingly remembered by her children:
Margaret & Henry Eshuis
Emmy Wassenaar (Andy deceased)
Tina & Siek Wassenaar
Ruth & Gerry Schinkel
Lawrence & Linda Moraal
18 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.
A family service of thanksgiving was held in Fenwick, Ont., on September 12, 1997. Interment was at the Greenhill Cemetery in Kingsville, Ont. on September 13, 1997.
Correspondence address: Emmy Wassenaar, 21 Michael Snow Crt., Sarnia, ON N7W 1B7.

Personal

Widow, early sixties, seeks a warm, loving gentleman, who desires marriage, is open-minded, kind-hearted and interested in a life-time partner for a happy home life. I am honest, sincere, sensitive. Looks are not as important as a kind, gentle, loving nature. Let's enjoy our golden years together. If you live in southern Ontario, please write in Dutch or English to: **File #2673, c/o Christian Courier, #4-261 Martindale Rd., St.Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Obituaries

Sept. 13, 1904 Sept. 17, 1997
"Jesus, uw verzoenend sterven is het rustpunt van mijn hart."
Peacefully the Lord called home
CORNELIS VANDER VEEN
beloved husband (66 years) of Albertje Vander Veen-Kobes.
Lovingly remembered by his children and grandchildren:
Karl & Nan
Lani
Andy & Alice
Betty & John, Kasey & Liz, Diane & Ralph, Sharon & Jeff
Jim & Iems
Liz & Brian, Audrey & Gary, Karl & Francie, Aaron
Jace
Chris & Ann
Monica & Dave, Marisa & Mendelt, Christy
Rinske & Hans
Michael & Susan, Richard
Jeltje
Rinke & Sonya
Rachel, Jason, Tamara, Benjamin, Davita
and 23 great-grandchildren.
Survived by Jeltje Vander Veen (sister).
Correspondence address:
Holland Christian Homes, Faith Manor, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7.

Teachers

FRUITLAND, ONT.:
John Knox Memorial Christian School invites applications for two maternity-leave situations in the 1997-1998 school year. **Full-time Grade 4/5 classroom teacher position to commence on Jan. 5, 1998; part-time Grade 4-8 music specialist position to commence on Feb. 23, 1998.** The ideal candidates will possess a valid provincial or state teacher certificate, a Christian School Teacher Certificate (CSTC) and have several years of succesful teaching experience.
Persons interested in this position should contact: **Mr. J. de Jager, Principal, at 905-643-2460** for more information as well as to receive application forms. Applications will be received until the position has been filled.

Personal

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Classifieds

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Accounting Practice Wanted:
Experienced CGA wishes to purchase a block of accounts or an existing practice in Ontario. **Reply to File #2674, c/o Christian Courier, #4-261Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

For sale

Farm & Garden Centre.
For sale, at real savings, **a farm & garden centre,** near **Goderich, Ont.** Reduced to only **$298,800** (was **$399,000**), plus stock and equipment. Close to Lake Huron on HWY 8, 10-acre parcel, beatifully landscaped.

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This is your chance if you are thinking of buying a business. Also zoned for small engine repairs/sales & service. Great view from the highway, with 800 ft. frontage for display. Fenced-in store area with gates. Lots of room for greenhouses and tree crops, which are needed in this area. The home has three kitchens. Great for two families, with separate entrances. A real steal! Don't pause on this one! Act now!

Phone (519) 524-5372 (ask for Don McCauley) or (519) 524-9522. Smith's Farm & Garden Centre, R.R.2, Goderich, ON N7A 3X8.

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Church News

Christian Reformed Church Calls accepted:
— Bethel, Edmonton, Alta., Candidate Johannes Schouten.

Change in time of service:
— Cephas, Peterborough, Ont., the morning service now starts at 11 a.m.

New addresses:
— Rev. Evert Gritter, 4633 - 7th Ave., Edson, AB T7E 1C9
— Rev. Riemer Praamsma, 3 Huron Dr., Brighton, ON K0K 1H0; phone (613) 475-4369.
— Rev. Robert Loerts, 919 Church St., Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0; phone (905) 892-2799.

Remember:

There will be no issue of CC next week

See you Oct. 10

DORDT COLLEGE

Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking Christian academicians for openings beginning August 1998 in the following areas:

Business Administration:
marketing and management
History:
Western civilization, introductory and upper level European, and introductory non-Western history.
Mathematics:
introductory and upper level
Music:
choir, music history, general education arts course (one-year position)
Theology:
general education courses in biblical theology, upper level courses in biblical studies, missions, and Greek

To receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a curriculum vitae and a letter of interest which provides evidence of that commitment to:
Dr. Rockne McCarthy; Dordt College; 498 4th Ave. NE; Sioux Center, IA 51250; facsimile: (712) 722-4496;
e-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu.

Review of candidates begins **November 10, 1997.**

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution and encourages the nominations and candidacies of women and minorities

Miscellaneous

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1997

12 NOON: COMPLEMENTARY LUNCHEON/STUDENT CHOIR/SPEAKER
1:30 PM: REGISTRATION
2:00 PM: ANNUAL MEETING (COLLEGE AUDITORIUM)

RSVP for luncheon by October 10 (Office of the President)

GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE MIKE GOHEEN, FACULTY MEMBER AND CAMPUS PASTOR

ALL MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF REDEEMER COLLEGE ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND.

In the event of a disruption of postal service, agendas will be available in selected churches in Ontario and Eastern Canada.

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777 Garner Rd. E. (formerly Highway 53)
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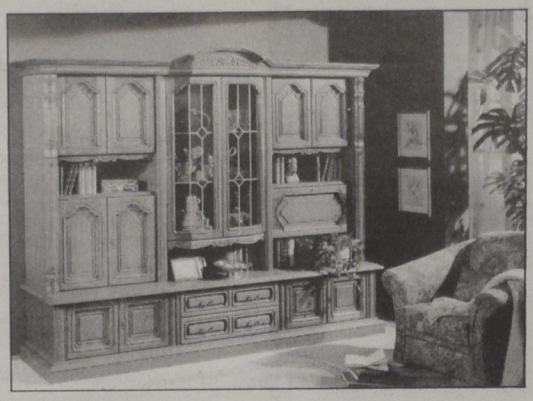

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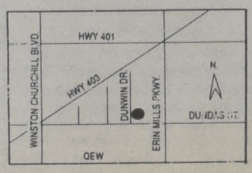

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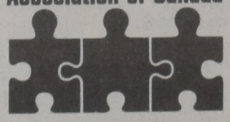

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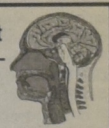

The following are symptoms of MS—do you have any?:
- ❑ balance and coordination problems
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- ❑ muscle weakness
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- ❑ abnormal speech
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More information about MS can be obtained by calling the local MS Society chapter or visiting these websites at http://www.mssoc.ca. or http://www.mslife.com. NC

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Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Sept. 28 Farewell service for Rev. Henry Eshuis, 4:30 p.m., Bethany CRC, **Fenwick**, Ont. Info.: (905) 386-6719 (#)

Sept. 28 Dutch worship service led by Rev. J. Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Oct. 2 "Words in Season," visit the ICS, 229 College St., **Toronto**, Ont., to celebrate 30 years of publishing and two recent books by ICS faculty Paul Marshall and Jim Olthuis. Info.: (416)979-2331.

Oct. 2 The 100-voice *Hervormd Kerkkoor Kampen (Bovenkerk)*, from Kampen, the Neth., directed by Harry Hamer, assisted by organist Harm Hoeve, will give its only Ontario concert at 7:30 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Tickets/info.: John VanderLaan at (905) 648-3170.

Oct. 3-5 Fortieth anniversary celebrations, Maranatha CRC, **York**, Ont. **Oct. 3:** 7:30 p.m., special evening at Fisherville Community Centre, **Fisherville**, Ont.; **Oct. 5:** 10 a.m., anniversary worship service at Maranatha CRC, **York**, Ont. Info.: (905) 765-9986 (#).

Oct.4-5 Twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of Lambton Chr.High School, **Sarnia**, Ont. **Oct.4:** 2-9 p.m. special programs at the school. **Oct.5:** 6:30 p.m. First CRC, **Sarnia**, Ont., Lambton-County CRCs join in a combined worship service of praise and thanksgiving. Info.: (519) 337-9122.

Oct. 8 Noon hour organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, **Toronto**, Ont.

Oct. 9 Noon hour organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, St. Paul's Anglican Church (Bloor & Jarvis), **Toronto**, Ont.

Oct. 16 Canadian poet and novelist Joy Kogawa will be at Redeemer College for book signings and a public reading at 8 p.m., RC, **Ancaster**, Ont. Free admission.

Oct. 17 *Toronto Rally* hosted by Redeemer College, 7:30 p.m., at Toronto Distr.Chr.High School, **Woodbridge** Ont. Performances by the choirs of Redeemer College, TDCH and the Peoples Christian Academy. Free-will offering.

Oct. 17-18 Forum on the role of classis in supporting local ministry, 8 p.m., at Hamilton DCHS, **Ancaster**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Craig Van Gelder. Open to all. Info./registration: contact John Van Til (519) 453-5844 (#)

Oct. 18 Annual day of encouragement and training for deacons, elders and other caregivers, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at HDCHS, **Ancaster**, Ont. Theme: "Helping to bring hope!" Featuring 19 workshops and 19 seminars. Cost $40. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or call Diaconal Ministries at (905) 646-4511 (#)

Oct. 18 The Netherlands Bazaar, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Thornhill Community Centre (Bayview Ave. & John St.), **Thornhill**, Ont. Info.: (905) 477-1243 (#)

Oct. 18 Concert by the WLU Symphony, featuring organist Jonathan Oldengarm, 7:30 p.m., Benton St. Baptist Church, **Kitchener**, Ont.

Oct. 25 Christian Rainbows Fellowship meets at 10 a.m., in **Ingersoll**, Ont. Speakers: Lesley Bell and Denise Jennings, both from the St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital, and Rev. John De Vries. Pre-registration of $7 required. Info.: (905)639-1075 or (519)246-9993.

Oct. 25 Community concert by organist Jonathan Oldengarm, 7:30 p.m., Benton St. Baptist Church, **Kitchener**, Ont.

Oct. 27-31 Speaking tour of Dr. John P. Roberts of the John Calvin Seminary (Mexico City) in Western Canada. **Oct.27**: Winnipeg, Man.; **Oct.28:** Edmonton, Alta.; **Oct.29:** Calgary, Alta.; **Oct.30:** Lethbridge, Alta.; **Oct.31:** Vancouver, B.C. Watch for local announcements!

Nov. 7 Christian Festival Concert by the 100-voice choir and concert band of the Ont. Chr. Music Assembly, with special guests from Europe, under the direction of Leendert Kooij. At 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. For tickets/info. call (416) 636-9779 (#).

Cyber-stats

• A 1996 survey conducted for Industry Canada reported that 23 per cent of Canadians aged 12 and over use the Net.

* According to Statistics Canada, 7.4 per cent of Canadians had home Internet access in 1996.

* The number of Internet users is expected to rise from 30-50 million today to over 500 million by the year 2000.

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Twenty years later Biko's ideas flourish

Stephen Biko: portrait by Daily Dispatch *artist Don Kenyon*

Bert Witvoet (with files from *Vanguard* and South African papers)

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — September 12 has been celebrated for the past two decades by Black Consciousness (BC) adherents in memory of Stephen Bantu Biko, considered the father of that philosophy.

Twenty years ago this past September 12, Biko, then age 30, died at the hands of the South African secret police. According to an interview he gave to Bernard Zylstra, former senior member at the Institute for Christian Studies (*Vanguard*, Sept.-Oct. 1977), Biko believed in the cultural and political revival of blacks in Africa without resorting to violence. "We began to realize that blacks themselves had to speak out about the black predicament," he told Zylstra. "We could no longer depend upon [liberal] whites answering the question: 'Who are we?'"

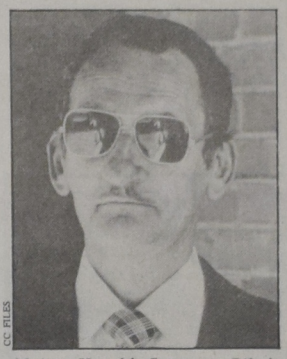
For his beliefs, Biko was "beaten up, chained hand and foot to a metal grille in his cell with his arms stretched out in a crucifix position and killed by policemen who admit that they went beyond the law in dealing with the Black Consciousness leader" (*The Sowetan*, Sept. 12).

President Nelson Mandela unveiled a statue in Biko's honor, a road will be named after Biko, and the cell in which he was beaten unconscious in Port Elizabeth will be turned into a library.

According to the *The Star*, Biko's ideas are fast gaining popularity today.

"In his speeches and writings, Biko continuously referred to the need for the people of Africa to take pride in themselves and all they have," says an editorial in *The Star*. "Biko believed that for South Africa, and indeed the whole continent, there could be no real freedom until black people became masters of their own destiny. He relentlessly fought to unite black people and their organizations, just as Deputy President Thabo Mbeki today is trying to unite South Africans behind a common vision for the country."

On September 10 this year, Major Harold Snyman, Biko's chief interrogator, admitted for the first time before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that Stephen Biko "was made to stand manacled to a security gate for almost a whole day after sustaining fatal brain injuries in a scuffle with police" (*The Citizen*, Sept. 11).



CC FILES

Major Harold Snyman, Biko's chief interrogator

Major Snyman admitted to a cover-up, and that he had lied at the 1977 inquest into Biko's death. Snyman is one of five former security police seeking amnesty for their part in Biko's death.

Biko always denied that he was a racist. In his interview with Zylstra he said, "Whites must be made to realize that they are *only* human, not superior. Same with blacks. They must be made to realize that they are *also* human, not inferior."

Biko admitted to Zylstra that he expected an escalation of conflict before the Afrikaner regime would see the light and allow blacks full participation in the economy and in government.

But he knew that white supremacy was dead in Africa, and he looked for a non-racist state in which blacks could define themselves. "The future political system of this country may not be racist in any way. This also means that blacks may not take revenge on whites," said Biko, two months before his life was snuffed out in a police cell.

Christian television a must for Canada, says CJIL founder

Gordon Legge

LETHBRIDGE, Alta. — The founder of Canada's first Christian television station says he has to expand his market or cease operations.

Rev. Dick Dewert, president of CJIL — the "Miracle Channel" in Lethbridge — is determined to get on cable television in Western Canada. He's appealing to cable customers across the West to let their cable networks know that they want Christian television in Canada.

"We're at a juncture where we will either grow or we'll die," Dewert said in a telephone interview. "There's no alternative. We have to grow. We're going ahead with satellite service and we have several cable companies that are very close to signing with us."

Dewert, former pastor of the Lethbridge Victory Church, received a license for the country's first Christian television station in April 1995. He began broadcasting in mid-January of 1996.

Since then, CJIL has become a full power, 24-hour station broadcast on channel 17 in Lethbridge and Cable 5. Because of the limited market in southern Alberta, Dewert wants to expand and broadcast it in other parts of the West.

Spiritually poor TV

Dewert is frustrated. "Our television airways are devoid of spiritual content and it's sad to see the decision is made purely for economic reasons." He's appealing to consumers to express their support for Christian television.

"Right now we need as much support as we can get. The only people that have influence are the customers. They need to send a message to cable companies saying it's a high priority."

Meanwhile, on a month-to-month basis, the station continues to struggle financially. "Our market size doesn't carry us. We've really been able to pull it off because of our extra fundraising."

But Dewert's confident he'll have yet one more miracle since he first dreamed of establishing a Christian television station more than a decade ago.

News Digest

Boy gives $500 to starving

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Matthew Rhim, a seven-year-old St. Catharines, Ont., boy, has given his life savings to help ease the suffering of starving North Koreans, reports the *Toronto Star*. After seeing media coverage of the famine, Matthew asked his mother, Myong Sook Rhim, how people could live without food.

"He feels sorry. He has a soft heart," she says.

Rhim's parents saved part of the money from Matthew's government baby bonuses, and for a month Matthew gave up snacks like ice cream, setting aside the money saved.

Utah wants Olympic beer ad ban

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — Although advertising contracts have become a vital part of the Olympic Games' financial success, the 2002 Winter Games, to be held in Utah, may be without alcohol advertising, reports the *Christian Science Monitor*.

The Salt Lake Olympic organizing committee is against alcohol advertising, even though Budweiser recently paid $40 million to be the official beer of the 1996 Summer Games.

For 150 years Utah has had pride in its tradition as a state founded by Mormons on religious precepts; for many, it's about morals, not money. "It is who you are; it forms the basis of your values," says State Rep. Mary Carlson.

Class saves life

TORONTO — A Toronto man who had just finished a course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) had a chance to apply the technique on his way home from his final course. Wayne Doran, 40, was walking near Toronto's Union Station recently when he saw David Seale collapse, says the *Toronto Star*.

"I took his pulse and he didn't have any," says Doran. "Then I started chest compressions." After paramedics arrived, Seale was resuscitated and taken to a nearby hospital for surgery.

Seale, who later met and talked with Doran, joked that Doran must have thought seeing him prostrate was "his final exam."